

a time to keep



history  
of the  
first  
united  
methodist  
church  
of  
oviEdo  
FLORIDA

1873-1973





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## INTRODUCTION

For every thing there is a season,  
and a time to every purpose under  
the heaven: ...a time to keep,  
and a time to cast away.

Ecclesiastes 3

A sense of history is essential for civilization. There is a time when we owe it to ourselves as well as to those who preceded us to remember—to keep as much as we can of what went before. Some of what we keep is sad or amusing, some routine, some still bearing traces of the strong human feelings that pulsed in it in years gone by. Yet without a record of the past our origins are lost, our present meaningless, and our future obscure.

A Time to Keep was written to revive the rich heritage of our church. It is dedicated to the glory of God and to the memory of the faithful Christians who built the First United Methodist Church of Oviedo.

The History Committee:

Richard Adicks, chairman  
Clara Lee Evans  
Ben H. Jones  
Kathryn Lawton  
Donna M. Neely



This history began in the valuable tie with the past provided for us by Mrs. W. P. Carter -- "Aunt Bro" -- an active member of the History Committee until her death in February 1973. She enriched the story of the church by her good-humored reminiscences taken from her store of ninety-two years.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many persons have helped to make this history possible. First among them are those who kept careful records of the Oviedo Methodist Church since 1879. Surely few churches have more complete minutes and records. Several have talked with us about their memories of the church, enlivening what otherwise might have been dull facts. These included Mrs. T.W. Lawton, Mrs. B.G. Smith, Mrs. W.J. Lawton, Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, Sr., Mr. Frank W. Talbott, Mr. and Mrs. M.L. Gary, Mrs. Charles Niblack, Mr. C.S. Lee, Mrs. J.H. Staley, Mr. C.R. Clonts, Mrs. Pauline West, and the Rev. Vincent Crawford, O.S.B. For the loan of photographs used in this history, we are indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Carter, Mrs. W.J. Lawton, Mrs. John Ridenour, and Mrs. Paul Callaway.

The type for this book was set by Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Paugh, publishers of the Outlook; and Larry Neely, editor of the Outlook, did the complete lay-out. We are grateful to all three for the use of their expert knowledge in the technical preparation.

Finally, and certainly far from least, we express our gratitude to Mildred Adicks, Ralph Neely, and John Evans for their unfailing encouragement, support, and advice.

The Authors:

Richard Adicks  
Donna M. Neely  
Clara Lee Evans  
Kathryn Lawton





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(These consist of nineteen bound report books and several loose reports, covering the periods 1879-1890 and 1896 to the present.)



## **FOSTER CHAPEL: THE YEARS OF THE CIRCUIT**

Richard Adicks

### **The Methodist Church in Early Florida**

There were probably Methodist worshippers in the Jacksonville area before Spain ceded Florida to the United States in 1821, even though Protestantism was officially forbidden in the territory before that time. (From Saddlebags to Sattellites, p. 15). After the cession, Florida Methodists were served by the South Carolina Conference, which sent to Florida circuit riders like John Slade, "the Father of Florida Methodism." Afterward the Georgia Conference took responsibility for the territory, and the Florida Conference was created in 1844. In February 1845, three years after the costly, seven-year Second Seminole War had ended, and a few weeks before Florida became a state, the Florida Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met for the first time in Tallahassee. One action of this conference was to join other Southern churches in withdrawing from the Methodist Episcopal Church and establishing the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

During the 1840's and 1850's the Methodist Church in Florida doubled in membership and grew from thirty-two ministers available for appointment in 1846 to eighty-two in 1860. This situation changed with the Civil War (1861-1865), which not only delayed expansion of the church into central and southern Florida, but also left it even weaker in members and in finances. From nearly 20,000 members in 1861, it had

shrunken to about 6000 members and thirty-six ministers, owing to the transfer of many churches to the Georgia Conference and the loss of Negro members to the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church (From Saddlebags to Satellites, pp. 71-72). After the war, the St. Johns River Conference was founded by the Methodist Episcopal Church in an effort to regain the members lost as a result of secession, but it remained a small conference and was to unite in 1939 with the Florida Conference of the M.E. Church South.

Most Floridians in 1865 lived in North Florida. Individual Methodists there found their Confederate money worthless, their farms run down, and their society changing as a result of Reconstruction. Central and southern Florida offered a new territory where the church could grow and where families could re-build lives shattered by the war.

### FOSTER CHAPEL

Soon after the war settlers moved into the Lake Jessup area. They came on horseback, in wagons drawn by mules or oxen, and later by the only commercial transportation--river steamer to Solary's wharf on Lake Jessup. Tradition says that they held their first worship service in 1869, under a brush arbor near where the First Baptist Church of Oviedo now stands. The brush arbor was a simple structure of cypress and pine poles, covered on top with pine boughs and palm fronds. The first service was probably led by Walter Gwynn, a Baptist layman who had moved here from Leon County about 1868. "Colonel" Gwynn--military title in the post-war South bore little relation to actual rank--was a nephew of Florida's first post-war governor, David Walker, and had served as a major in the Confederate Army Engineer Corps before being called to Tallahassee to take the job of State Comptroller. The interdenominational church meetings continued for months until one Sunday Needham Jelks called on his fellow Baptists to join him the following week in starting a Baptist church. (History, First Baptist Church of Oviedo). Not to be outdone, one of the Methodists--perhaps A.B. Beall--rose to his feet to call a meeting of Methodists at the same time. The churches separated, but would maintain close ties of cooperation. They were to hold a Union Sunday School until 1900, and weekly religious services continued for years to alternate between the churches.



The Lake Jessup Methodists could not afford for several years to build a church, so they constructed another brush arbor on the site of the present Methodist youth building. For pews, they used boards resting on pine logs. Only seven members were listed on the church roll in 1873: Sarah A. Watts, Henryetta L. Mitchell, A.B. Beall, Minnie E. Beall, Samuel K. Beall, B.B. Beall, and John Beall (Register 1). Henryetta Mitchell, wife of John R.J. Mitchell, was to give the land where the church is now located, and A.B. Beall served as trustee for several years until he moved away with his family about 1878. In 1874, Sarah Watts, the widow of Joseph B. Watts, sold to Beall as trustee five acres for \$5.00. This property, northwest of the cemetery on the corner of Aulin Street and State Road 426, may have been intended for a church building, but was instead sold by the church in 1883 for \$130.

The Orlando Circuit included all of Orange County, which then comprised what are now Osceola and Seminole counties. It had been established in 1859, but no regular pastor had been available during most of the Civil War. Appointments by the Florida Conference of the M.E. Church South had resumed not long after the war, and in January 1873 James G. Tyson added the Lake Jessup community to his Orlando Circuit. Tyson was followed in 1874 and 1875 by James MacDonald.

The circuit rider was a dedicated man, severe in the demands that he put on himself in the service of God. On a salary of \$400 to \$500 he rode on horseback for miles through almost trackless woods, ministering to scattered congregations some of which he could find only by means of blazes on pine trees. J.C. Ley, a presiding elder (district superintendent) who preached at Orlando in 1859, reports: "My district extended from the Georgia line embracing Orange County, and from the Atlantic to the Gulf, yet in the whole district there were but three ordained pastors. To meet these conditions I arranged with the pastors to hold revival services at different places each week between quarterly meetings and administer the Sacraments." (History of First Methodist Church of Orlando, 1944). Nor was this thinly spread and devoted a clergy peculiar just to the Methodists. The Reverend R.W. Lawton, pastor of the Oviedo Baptist Church in the 1880's, walked to Fort Christmas once a month to hold services there until at last his parishioners were able to raise sixty dollars to buy him a pony. (History of First Baptist Church of Oviedo, 1969).

In January 1875 O.W. Ransom was appointed to the Orlando Circuit. (Register 1). Mr. Ransom had been transferred to Florida after contracting tuberculosis, and he may have died while serving the circuit or been forced by his health to retire, because he was replaced by S.L. Smith in mid-1877. (Register1). Then in November the Lake Jessup church was added to the Mellonville (Sanford) Circuit and came under the pastoral leadership of a minister who was to become one of the most outstanding in Florida Methodism: Robert Howren Barnett.

Robert H. Barnett, the son of a minister in the Florida Conference later saw his brother, his uncle, and his son admitted to the Conference. He himself became a minister in 1869, and served in north Florida before coming to the Mellonville Circuit for the first time in 1874. (History of First Methodist Church, Sanford). Under his leadership, the fifteen Methodists in Mellonville built Ernest Chapel, named in honor of one of their members. This church was the forerunner of Ebenezer Church and of the First Methodist Church of Sanford. In 1875, at the request of the Bishop, the 26-year-old Barnett purchased a horse and a new bridle and saddle and set out along the St. Johns for the Indian River country. At Titusville, he arranged for services once a month with his nephew, A.A. Barnett, as pastor. Riding south to Rockledge, where he established a second mission, he learned that the next house to the south was sixty-five miles away, with no road in between. He borrowed a rowboat, crossed the Indian River, and arranged for monthly services on Merritt Island. (Barnett, p.41)

In 1874, O.W. Ransom called on R.H. Barnett to help him conduct a "great revival" in Orlando. Orlando was then a nondescript frontier village of about 450 people, with two or three stores, a small hotel, and a thriving saloon. Some measure of the character of the town can be seen in the fact that the saloon-keeper was the town marshal. What is more, he was unfriendly to evangelistic endeavors. R.H. Barnett has described one adventure that occurred during this 1874 meeting: "On Saturday night the town marshal and some of his pals went to the meeting and tried to break up the services. The following Wednesday night the bar-keeper was shot to death by one of his drunken customers, leaving a helpless wife and several little children. Thus God's judgments, while always sure, are sometimes swift." (Letter, quoted in History of Orlando First Methodist Church).

Reappointed to Mellonville in November 1877, the Rev. Barnett set out from Leesburg, with his wife and two small children, in a horse and buggy. At Dead River, between Lake Eustis and Lake Harris, he had to hire a man to ferry his family and their baggage across in a rowboat, while he drove the horse, still harnessed to the wagon, through water that reached to his waist. (Barnett, pp. 11-12)

When his circuit brought him to Lake Jessup in late 1877, R.H. Barnett was no stranger. A relative, Laura Lee, and her husband, J.H. Lee, had been members of the Lake Jessup congregation since March 1875, having moved to the area in November 1874. Barnett was to inspire the Lees and their fellow church members to begin building their new church.

By 1878 the little congregation numbered forty-four members. The seven original members had been joined by the following: in 1874, Meredith E. and Martha Brock, William P. and Mary Rogers, Nancy E. Wheeler, James H. King, Annie L. Rouse, Joseph D. and Pamela G. Watts, Kannie E. Watts, J.W. Folsom and Charity Arnold. In 1875, Laura E. Magruder, James H. and Laura A. Lee, Gustavus Nelson, Charles O. Swanson, George W. Rouse, George Sinclair, Magie Godfrey, John Phillips, Vernon Smith, Henry V. Smith, Henry Lilljebjorn, and Ellen Douglass; in 1876, Caroline Rouse; in 1877, Wallace Somerville, John T. and Elizabeth J. Nix, and Thomas Arnold; and in 1878, Eric Anderson, William W. White, George Fox, John S. and Mary K. Womble, Alexander Foresman, and Fred P. Shaffer.

It must have been in the summer of 1878, after the crops were "laid by," that the men gathered to build their church on land belonging to John R. and Henryetta Mitchell, now the site of the Oviedo Cemetery. Captain Meredith Brock and his stepson James H. King, James H. Lee, Gustavus Nelson, Eric Anderson, George Fox, A.B. Beall and his sons -- they and others hauled cypress timbers and boards from the sawmill on Mill Creek, sawed and planed, laid foundations, hauled onto the roof bundles of shingles tied to ropes by their wives, and raised their new church. The wives--Martha Brock, Laura Lee, Mary Gwynn Fox--brought dinner to the site, and the church families ate together each day under the trees. The ladies kept wary eyes all the time on a party of Indians who would come and silently watch the construction. Then one Sunday, probably in early 1879, proud of their accomplishment and hard work, they



entered the church for a sermon of dedication from the Rev. Barnett.

Of the builders of the church, some, like George Fox and A.B. Beall, were to move away from Lake Jessup a few years later. Of the others, four men were to stand out as church leaders in the years to come: Meredith Brock, Eric Anderson, James H. King, and James H. Lee.

Captain Meredith E. Brock, one of the original members of the church, was trustee and steward until his death. He had served as a cavalry officer under General John B. Hood in the defense of Atlanta in 1864 and had been wounded in battle. His sword hung over the mantelpiece in the home of his stepson James H. King, and when young George Crawford asked his grandmother, Mrs. King, how many Yankees Captain Brock had killed with it, she told him, "As many as he could."

People said that Captain Brock could charm a rattlesnake, then pick it up and cut off its head. A large man, he liked to frighten his little granddaughters by wrapping a black snake around his neck and letting it peer at them out of his bushy black beard. In church, he was a severe critic of long sermons and was sometimes seen to sit reading a newspaper after the preacher had held forth too long to suit him.

Eric Anderson, a Swedish immigrant, was a trustee and the sexton for many years. When he died in 1903 his friends placed in the church records a memoir of love and respect for this man who had served his church so faithfully in spite of slender means.

It may be that Captain Brock's paper-reading caught the attention of Mrs. Anderson, who was said to be able to waggle her finger faster in rebuke than any self-appointed monitor in Oviedo. Once her vibrating index finger was aimed at a boy who was whispering during prayer. The boy responded by stepping into the center aisle and standing on his head. Unlike some churches of that day (Lake Howell was one) where the women had to sit on one side of the church while the men sat on the other, at Foster Chapel husbands and wives sat together. It was the custom for the preacher to call on members of the congregation to pray. When her husband had prayed for several minutes, Mrs. Anderson would tug on his coattail and whisper loudly, "Prayed long enough."

Much of the leadership came from two men, James Hiram Lee (1844-1920) and James Henry King (1852-1909). Both represented the Oviedo church at sessions of the Florida



Conference, and both took it upon themselves each year to solicit unpaid assessments for the pastor's salary and to dig into their own pockets to make up any deficit. J.H. Lee, a Confederate veteran, gave generously of his time to serve his church and his community. He served as church secretary, trustee, steward, lay leader, and Sunday-school superintendent for over thirty years. On top of this, for sixteen years he was a member of the Orange County Commission. J.H. King, who near the end of his life served a term in the Florida Legislature, also served the church as trustee, steward, and Sunday-school superintendent.

J.H. and Laura Lee brought up nine children, all of whom were to follow their parents in service to Foster Chapel: Wiley, Theo, Julia (Mrs. B.P. Matheson), Annie (Mrs. W.L. Carter), Lillian (Mrs. W. J. Lawton), George (Mrs. B. F. Wheeler, Sr.), Lottie (Mrs. T. W. Lawton), James H., Jr., and Charles. Of the three daughters of J. H. and Mary King--Anita, Martha and Nell--only Nell remained in Oviedo. She married George Morgan, and together the Morgans were to set an example of dedicated service to the church.

As in any farming community, income was uncertain. In the 1880's no member of the church could give more than \$25 a year, and most gave \$5 or \$10. (Records, 1879-90) The pastor's salary for the Mellonville circuit in 1879 was \$500, of which the Oviedo church was to pay \$125. The church always met its assessment, because many members sacrificed to give to their church. W.G. White, the storekeeper at White's Wharf, met his pledge of \$30 by giving merchandise to the pastor. Eric Anderson worked for two days in an orange grove in order to earn \$2 for the church. Laura A. Lee was the only wife in the church who maintained a pledge in addition to her husband's, and as each of the Lee children became old enough to give, they appeared in the financial records.

Substantial financial help came from Dr. Henry Foster (1821-1901), a physician from Clifton Springs, New York (near Rochester) who had first started spending winters along the St. Johns in 1867 and came to Oviedo in 1870. Dr. Foster first bought land on Lake Charm in 1874, and then sold property to other northerners as winter retreats. In 1873 he married Mary Edwards, a descendant of Jonathan Edwards. A devoutly religious couple, Dr. and Mrs. Foster sent to New York for the furnishings of the new Methodist church--pulpit, altar rail, pews, the Estey reed organ, and stained-glass windows. In gratitude for his help, the congregation named their new

church Foster Chapel. Although never a member, Dr. Foster gave \$50 to Foster Chapel each year from 1880 and \$100 in 1890. His generosity was to be found everywhere. He built the Lake Charm Memorial Chapel (now the Emmett Waltz home) in 1888 in memory of his brother, and he helped to build the Antioch Baptist Church, which was founded in 1875 by black members of the community.

One day in 1879 the new postmaster, Andrew Aulin, searching a map of Spain for a unique name for his new post office, put his finger on the name of Oviedo, a university town in the province of Asturias, and the Lake Jessup community acquired a new name. About the same time, the First Baptist congregation may have built a new church. (They were to build a more lasting structure in 1887. (History of Oviedo Baptist Church) After ten years of settlement, the people of Oviedo could see their town with three new churches and a new name, a promising place to bring up their families.

Oviedo did not have a municipal government, and the sheriff and courts were far away in Orlando. (Oviedo was in Orange County until Seminole County was formed in 1913.) Misdemeanors and offenses against morality were sometimes tried and punished by the church. The only punishment that the church could levy, however, was expulsion, and the penalty was invoked in at least three instances. In 1880 three members were expelled for not attending church service, one of them having been investigated earlier by a committee for "using profane language, etc." Another member was expelled earlier that year for "quarreling...using very abusive and threatening language," and "an assault (on another church member) advancing on him declaring he would breake his mouth if he opened it again." In 1883 occurred the most serious charge, which resulted in a trial for bigamy. The investigating committee brought forward a confession by the accused himself, the five members of the trial committee judged him guilty, and the pastor "pronounced the sentence of expulsion."

It would be a mistake to think that the officers of the church met principally to discipline their fellow members. The sentences of expulsion show that the people of the community expected strict standards of behavior, along with regular church attendance, but occasions when members fell far short of these expectations were no doubt rare. The fact that they are reported in the church minutes is a sign of their rarity.

Although the Baptists and the Methodists had built different churches, they held a united Sunday School, with J.H. Lee as superintendent, and Andrew Aulin, a Baptist, as assistant superintendent. The superintendent's weekly minutes for 1880 record what must have been a typical year. The roll for that year lists thirty-one pupils and seven leaders, and they met regularly at Foster Chapel, except for June and July and five Sundays when the weather was too bad. The leaders saw to it that the school had a suitable supply of books. They began the year with a purchase of twenty-four hymnals for \$1.63, and in June they wrote to Colonel Brewster, Mrs. Henry Foster, and the children of the Sunday School in Clifton Springs, New York, to thank them for a donation of "papers, cards, etc." (Reports, 1879-1890)

In 1880 the Sunday School started a tradition--the May picnic. In April a committee was appointed to plan the picnic at Clifton Springs (White's Wharf). A.A. Miller and J.M. Rice procured boats. The program committee consisted of Captain Meredith Brock, Mrs. Martha Brock, Miss Myntell Harris, Miss Helen Gwynn, Miss Katie Brewster, and Miss Flora Brewster. James Davis, D.W. Harris, John Womble, and Charles O. Swanson made up a committee to clear the grounds. Saturday, May 1, was the big day, and all the people of Oviedo were invited. They brought basket lunches and gallons of "sour-orange-ade," and for the hard-working community the May picnic was to become an annual event, when they could celebrate the end of a hard winter and relax for a day at the end of spring planting.

In December 1880 R.H. Barnett moved to another circuit. He was to return periodically during later years when he served as colporter for the Conference, travelling through the state selling religious books for the Conference. The Reverend A.A. Presbrey was then assigned to the Mellonville circuit. A carpenter by trade, he led the building of the First Methodist Church of Sanford, constructing most of it with his own hands. (History of First Methodist Church, Sanford)

In 1881 the Lake Jessup Circuit was established, consisting of Foster Chapel and Geneva, which had been founded in 1877. Indian River (Titusville) may have been included, because in 1882 George Sinclair of Foster Chapel accompanied the pastor, W.A. Simmons, to Indian River. (Reports, 1879-1890) Foster Chapel took pride in its role as a church in the Florida Conference, and the little congregation elected a lay delegate to the conference each year. In 1879, 1883, and 1899, it was J.H.



Lee. George Fox served as delegate in 1880, and J.H. King in 1881 and 1885.

Thurlow Bishop, the pastor appointed from July 1883 to December 1886, was a rousing preacher. In the late 1880's the tradition of the camp meeting had not yet died out, although it had its heyday before the Civil War. People would still come from miles around to camp where they could meet, gossip, and listen to a weekend of preaching. Years later, J.C. Ley recalled the camp meeting led by Thurlow Bishop at Zellwood (History of Orlando First Methodist), and the author of Bishop's obituary says of him: "No God of Olympus had such control of thunderbolts as he when assailing evil. Especially was he remorseless when pursuing the licensed liquor traffic, and yet so tender was he that the drunkard felt the warmth of sympathy which welled up in his heart for those thus snared by this great immoral octopus." (Journal of Florida Conference, 1901).

A controversy in the early 1880's centered on the location of the church. On March 3, 1882, the trustees bought from John R.J. and Henryetta Mitchell the five-acre lot where the church stood, Dr. Henry Foster having provided \$150 for the purchase. In return, the trustees were asked to deed to Dr. Foster the five acres northwest of the church. J.H. Lee, who must have foreseen that the coming of the railroad would cause the center of Oviedo to move eastward, opposed the transaction so strongly that he tried to resign as secretary, but the congregation would not accept his resignation. When Lee then proposed that the church be moved to Lake Charm--Dr. Foster had offered to pay for dismantling and reconstructing the building if the members would move the material--his proposal was tabled.

On July 23, 1882, Captain Brock reported that a poll of the membership showed four members opposed to the move. The trustees were then instructed to deed to Dr. Foster the five acres northwest of the church, and on June 9, 1883, the members accepted a deed for the five acres where the church stood. As for the property to the northwest--now owned by the Ashe family--it apparently was bought from Dr. Foster by Captain Brock, because it was deeded directly to Brock by the trustees on August 22, 1883, for a sum of \$130. It looked as though the church would stay in the cemetery.

Whatever some might have thought about the decision to leave the church where it was, all united in maintaining the property. On June 9, 1883, they named the following Saturday as a work day to do all necessary repairs and work on the



grounds. All were invited to help, and a committee appointed to direct the work: M.E. Brock, Eric Anderson, P.D. Wright, J.H. Lee, George Fox, and J.M. Jones. The "work day" at the church and the cemetery was to become a tradition of Foster Chapel.

Three years later the congregation again took up the question of moving the church. On October 3, 1886, Gustavus Nelson was instructed to have the cemetery surveyed into lots. Then on February 6, 1887, M.E. Brock proposed that the church be moved "to a more suitable and convenient place." Approval was unanimous. After the motion carried "to hold the lot as a burial ground in accordance with the provisions in the Deed," another vote permitted Captain Brock to remove several orange trees from the cemetery. The cemetery has remained in the possession of the church, the burial lots never being sold but only leased for terms of 999 years.

The following month, on March 31, Henryetta Mitchell gave the church a lot that is now the corner of King Street and Lake Jessup Avenue. The church was moved soon afterward, placed on a series of cypress logs and rolled along a path cleared through the woods, drawn by two teams of oxen. The move took several days, while children dodged into and around the building. Mrs. W.P. Carter recalls that Captain Brock played the organ while the church rolled through the woods. Perhaps some children joined in singing, as the move turned into a small festival for the little town. Probably the entire project cost no more than \$15. At least, that is the amount that Captain Brock paid on May 15 as a "subscription for moving the church," and he is the only person recorded as having paid anything toward the move. (Report, 1879-1880)

In 1889, the congregation raised \$1200 and built a two-story parsonage west of the church on additional property given by Mrs. Henryetta Mitchell on November 1 of that year. By this time, the Lake Jessup circuit consisted of three churches--Oviedo, Geneva, and Osteen--with a total membership of 182. Probably the parsonage was paid for by all three congregations.

The 1880's had seen a growth in membership. New members included John McCulley (1884) and his bride-to-be Emma Wahlgren (1885); Julia Lee (1884); Wiley and Theo Lee (1885); Johnie Mitchell (1885); George H. Brown (1886), who was to serve in the Florida House of Representatives in 1887; J.H. King's bride, Mary King (1886); Steen Nelson (1885), who with his brother Gustavus founded Nelson and Company; "Colonel"

Orlando S. Brewster and his family (1889), who built a twenty-six-room hotel on Lake Charm; Annie and Lillian Lee (1889); and nearly a hundred others.

But hard times were ahead. On February 4, 1895, a devastating freeze destroyed almost every orange grove in the Lake Jessup area, and many settlers moved away. The membership rolls of Foster Chapel show thirty-four names removed in the late 1890's, and by 1900 the circuit had dropped in membership to only 102. (Journal of Florida Conference, 1900) Two of these losses brought the members together in grief. Captain Meredith Brock died in November 1898, his wife having died "in great peace and without a struggle" a year earlier. (Report, 1879-1880)

In spite of the freeze, the circuit still met most of its obligations. In 1896 the trustees could claim proudly that they had paid the remaining \$27.50 in debt on the cemetery. Yet at the end of the year the circuit had been able to pay only \$420 of the assessed pastor's salary of \$650, and in subsequent years the assessment was lowered. The pastor, E.H. Giles, met the discouragements of the declining congregation with fortitude, but sometimes his uncertainty showed through. He lamented that the older people did not attend Sunday School, but he kept working with the children, saying, "I am trying to pay proper attention to the children. I never know when I have fulfilled my mission toward them. I hope as I study this grave question and gain greater measure of knowledge I shall be able to do more efficient work." (Report, 1896) Giles echoed the misgivings of many a dedicated minister. Generally, however, he was optimistic, feeling that "the spiritual condition of the church has an upward tendency." (Report, 1897)

One of the Rev. Giles' daughters, Miss Willie Giles, served as organist for the church at least until the time of her marriage to Frank Horton in December 1897. Another daughter, later Edna Giles Fuller, was to become the first woman elected to the Florida Legislature.

In February 1898 the trustees were able to buy a lot adjoining the church property from William and Mary Rogers. However, J.L. Pattillo, who succeeded E.H. Giles, was a man of demanding religious temperament who was not enthusiastic about the mere addition of property. At the end of his pastorate in November 1899, he felt compelled to report, "With much regret I must say there is no marked improvement so far as I can see in the State of the church. On financial lines we have



done reasonably well but Spiritually we have made no advancement." (Record, 1899) Still, the Rev. Pattillo found the moral attitudes of the people praiseworthy. In April 1899 he was glad to report that "in each of the three churches there seems to be growing sentiment against Sabbath breaking, drinking, card playing, and dancing."

Patillo's successor, Thomas Joseph Phillips (1842-1909), illustrated in his life the hardships and the triumphs of many nineteenth century circuit riders. He was born in South Carolina, but his family moved in 1850 to Madison County, Florida, where his father died three years later. T.J. Phillips had to work hard as a child and had little formal education before he enlisted in the Fifth Florida Regiment at the age of nineteen. After duty at Gettysburg and in other campaigns, he came back to Florida to attend school and then to teach for two years. He even studied law and was admitted to the bar, but never practiced. Instead, he heeded a call to the ministry, was licensed to preach in 1872, and admitted on trial into the Florida Conference in 1874. From that time until his death thirty-seven years later, Phillips served twenty-one appointments, during which time he and his wife succeeded in rearing and educating seven children. (Journal of the Florida Conference, 1910)

Phillips viewed the church more favorably than his predecessor had done. He found a "healthy interest" in missions, a good spiritual state, and good attendance. (Report, 1900) One thing displeased him, however. That was the Union Sunday School between the Baptists and the Methodists. When the non-denominational Christian Alliance group met at the Baptist church, in his words "creating much discord and dissension in the community," Phillips brought about the organization of a separate Methodist Sunday School. (Report, 1900) J.H. King succeeded J.H. Lee as superintendent. Although Phillips reported that both churches were satisfied, he was replaced as pastor at the end of the year. He may have moved too fast in making such a radical change in custom.

The Christian Alliance meetings offered some people in Oviedo the "spiritual advancement" that the Rev. Pattillo had seen the need of. This missionary group, based in Nyack, New York, had become established in Orlando, and a preacher from the group, Mr. Hester, had held meetings for five or six weeks in a room provided in the old Baptist parsonage. He had a strong spiritual impact, especially on young people, but the ministers of the town viewed the movement with suspicion.

The next pastor, W.H. Steinmeyer, also considered the Christian Alliance a threat. Yet his stern views may have met with approval, because the church sent a resolution to the Bishop asking that their pastor be returned. (Report, 1901) He was to serve three years, from January 1901 to November 1903. Steinmeyer's daughter, "Miss Minna," married H.B. McCall and remained in Oviedo to serve Foster Chapel as organist for many years.

At the outset of the twentieth century, Foster Chapel was beginning to recover from the reverses of the 1890's. Many of those who had joined the church in the 1880's had been dropped from the rolls, reflecting the extent of the exodus after the freeze. But a new generation had grown to maturity and were beginning new families. Marriages during these years included those of Dora McCulley and Robert E. Kelsey in 1904, Goldie Beckley and Charles S. Lee in 1915, and in 1917 D.E. Lundy and Elida McCulley (now Mrs. Paul Slavik). Annie Lee was married in 1902 to W.P. Carter in a double ceremony in which her sister Lillian married W.J. Lawton. W.P. Carter, a Baptist, joined Foster Chapel. Mrs. W.J. Lawton, on the other hand, began a custom repeated by two of her sisters, Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, who married in 1908, and Mrs. T.W. Lawton, who married in 1909. While their husbands remained active Baptists, the wives continued as Methodists in Foster Chapel. Both churches were stronger because of this unique practice.

The first two decades of the century would see more than 150 names added to the rolls. They included Nell King, Anita King Crawford, George Lee, Lottie Lee, James H. Lee, Jr., Dora McCulley, Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Lee, Walter Carter, Mr. and Mrs. Charles West, Henry Bunn McCall, Jr., Mrs. Ouida Wolcott, Mr. and Mrs. O.P. Swope, Mabel, Francis, Shirley, and Sidney Swope, George Morgan, Emmett Kelsey, Elizabeth Lawton, Kathryn Lawton, Mr. and Mrs. T.L. Lingo, Mrs. L.R. Mitchell, Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Gutteridge, Charlotte, Myra, Charles, Clarence, and Bertha Gutteridge, A.L. Hatch, Mrs. J.C. Partin, Lucille Partin, Miss Annie Mitchell, Mrs. Enoch Partin, Woolsey Sturdivant, Mr. and Mrs. L.E. Jordan, Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Williams, Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Young, Catherine, Maxine, and Wilda Young, James Arthur Partin, Frederick Warren McCall, John Kingsley Lawton, and Edward Thomas Partin. George King Crawford, who joined the church



as a child, was to become the Rev. Vincent Crawford, O.S.B., a priest and a Benedictine monk. The first person who grew up in the Oviedo Methodist Church to become a clergyman, he would always be grateful for the early religious training given him by his church-school teachers, Mrs. O.P. Swope and Miss Annie Mitchell.

James T. Mitchell, who succeeded the Rev. Steinmeyer, served from January 1903 through December 1905. The Rev. Mitchell was keenly interested in the children of the Sunday school but like so many other conscientious pastors, he noted that "I fall far short of my ideal" and asked, "Pray for me that I may grow in grace at this point." (Report, 1903) He especially lamented that "there is not the groaning for the salvation for souls there ought to be." (Report, 1903)

The circuit--consisting in 1903 of Oviedo, Geneva, Osteen, and Chuluota--had improved its financial condition. With Oviedo contributing about half, the charge was able to pay \$531 to the preacher in charge, \$69 toward the salary of the presiding elder (district superintendent), \$37 to foreign missions and \$37 to domestic missions. (Report, 1903) Although they valued the parsonage at \$1000 (Report, 1902), the church conference instructed J.H. Lee to insure it for only \$500, at a premium of \$15. (Report, 1903)

In 1904 the circuit again included three churches--Oviedo, Geneva, and Osteen. But in 1905 it was reconstituted to include Oviedo, Geneva, Lake Howell and Ebenezer (Sanford). Women's Home Missions Societies had been founded in 1903 at both Oviedo and Geneva. However, like his predecessors, J.T. Mitchell had to report quarter after quarter a low interest in the formation of an Epworth League (youth fellowship). The one League in the charge had been at Osteen, but it was discouragingly small. (Report, 1903). It was not until 1905 that he could boast of the formation of a League of twelve members at Geneva. (Report, 1905)

In 1906 the Rev. J.W. Austin came to serve a charge of three churches--Oviedo, Geneva, and Ebenezer. He was impressed immediately by the notable hospitality of the churches. (Report, 1906) Brother Austin's forte was missions. His reports stressed his frequent sermons on missions, and he prided himself on a collection of \$35 for missions in one quarter. (Report, 1906)

H.F. Harris served a two-church circuit, Oviedo and Geneva, in 1907. His concern was for the spiritual wellbeing of

the churches, feeling that "a more positive type of Piety" was needed, with "the bond of brotherhood and sympathy between the members." (Report, 1907)

In 1908 the Oviedo church reported \$2500 in property, as follows: church, \$1500; parsonage, \$1000; cemetery, \$100; and ten acres of wild land, \$100. At the Annual Conference in this year J.H. Lee was elected one of sixty delegates to attend the Laymen's Missionary Conference in Chattanooga on April 21 to 23, 1908. (Journal of Florida Conference, 1908)

The First Quarterly Conference in 1910, meeting in March, adopted a "Resolution of Respect on the Death of Brother J.H. King," who had died on December 7, 1909. The resolution noted that he had come to the Lake Jessup community in 1868, when he was sixteen years old, and that he had joined the church in 1874. "The Church sustains an inestimable loss in his death," added the authors of the resolution, J.H. Lee and Henry Baker. The pastor, Joseph S. Brooke, prayed that "his Mantle may fall on some young man." (Report, 1910) J.H. King had served as trustee since 1874, as steward since 1897, and as Sunday School Superintendent from 1900 until his death, except for one year.

Of the men who had led in the founding of the church, only J.H. Lee was left. He still kept the records of the church--financial and secretarial--so carefully that they would tell later generations the story of how the church grew. At the first quarterly conference in 1915, Lee served as secretary for the last time. Later that year the church voted to thank him for "his faithful service to the church." (Report, 7 July 1915) He represented Foster Chapel at the Annual Conference for the last time in 1917. In March 1916 he asked the quarterly conference, because of his failing eyesight, to relieve him as Sunday School superintendent, a job in which he had served for nineteen years or more. Although a committee was appointed to find a successor as superintendent, he was to continue in the appointment until 1918, and to remain trustee and steward until his death on October 7, 1920.

The founders of the church had always prized the close ties between Foster Chapel and the First Baptist Church which the Baptists and Methodists were to maintain. In April 1905 and at other times, they held joint revivals. (Report, 1905) In 1919 the youth of both churches had a unified Christian Endeavor Society (Report, Nov. 1919), which replaced the Epworth League established the year before with Mrs. T.L. Lingo as "its active and efficient superintendent." (Report, 1918)



When the Methodists had to make extensive repairs on their church in 1921, they accepted the invitation of the Baptists to hold services at the sister church. (Report, Oct. 1921) The cemetery, still owned by Foster Chapel, was supervised by both churches. B.F. Wheeler, Sr., a Baptist, became a member of the Cemetery Committee in the place of J.M. Jones when Jones died in 1909. Another group, consisting of both Baptists and Methodists, the Woodmen of the World, offered to care for the cemetery at their expense, (Report, March 1909)

Younger men and women were becoming leaders as the church moved into its second half century. New trustees included J.M. Jones, Steen Nelson, Charles West, W.P. Carter, O.P. Swope, J.H. Lee, Jr., H.B. McCall, Jr., L.E. Jordan, A.S. Cotton, Frank Norris, S.R. Wainright and T.L. Lingo. Many of these men also took seats on the Board of Stewards, along with George Morgan, W.B. Williams, and Mrs. W.J. Lawton. Mrs. W.P. Carter took on duties as treasurer in 1920, and Mrs. T.W. Lawton was one of those who carried on her father's work as secretary of the quarterly conference. Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, Sr., assumed many leadership duties, including major fund-raising.

George Morgan was elected Sunday School superintendent in 1918, but he entered the Army soon afterward, and was succeeded briefly by L.A. Sheldon. T.L. Lingo, elected superintendent in 1919, was to serve in this office for thirty-six years. The Sunday School presented a special challenge. The Rev. James T. Mitchell had reported in November 1904 that "our Sunday school at Oviedo has suffered greatly in the loss of several who were officers and some others who were only members. These have gone from Oviedo, some only temporarily, others permanently. The interest otherwise is not all that could be desired." At the end of 1910 and again in 1911 Joseph S. Brooke lamented that the Sunday School, "struggling for life," was reduced to one Bible class. (Report, Sept 1911)

The picture changed, however. On "Sunday School Day" in early 1921 the Oviedo Sunday School had the second largest attendance in Florida. For its achievement, the church was awarded a scholarship to the Junaluska Summer School, and T.L. Lingo was chosen to represent the church at the school. (Report, July 1921)

Like so many other Americans in the early years of the twentieth century, the people of Oviedo were becoming more aware of conditions in the rest of the world. The First World War thrust itself on them. In October 1917 the church voted to



buy khaki-bound Testaments for men going into the services. The following year wartime service called away the Sunday School superintendent, George Morgan. The Rev. James E. Hartsfield observed that "our people are responding to the needs of our great nation to prosecute and terminate this great and cruel war." (Report, June 1918) Other members of the church who entered the services were Don Carraway, Charles Lee, James Lee, Joe Leinhart, Paul Slavik, Woolsey Sturdivant, and Henry Bunn McCall. After the war, the church members responded to the needs for Polish Relief, canvassing the town in order to send a large quantity of clothing and shoes. (Report, Nov. 1920)

In one other way the outside world invaded Oviedo during the pastorate of the Rev. Hartsfield in 1918: he was the first minister for the Oviedo circuit to make his rounds in an automobile.

The condition of the parsonage was a serious concern. In 1909 a new well was dug (Report, Sept. 1909), and in the spring of 1912, after several complaints by pastors about the state of the twenty-three-year-old house, several major repairs were made. Then in 1919 a disaster nearly occurred. On January 5, shortly after the L.E. Wright family moved in, the parsonage caught fire. The pastor's family and their neighbors rallied to form a bucket brigade leading from the pump. They passed buckets from hand to hand and poured them on the roof, confining the fire to that part of the building. The water damage was widespread, however, and total repairs amounted to \$464.50. The insurance paid only \$164.95. Within a week \$212.50 had been raised to pay the balance. (Report, Jan. 1919) Help came from others in the community, and the people of Geneva gave a new oil stove and a "fireless cooker." (Report, April 1919)

The pastor from 1919 through 1922, L.E. Wright, had been a member of the White House detail of the Secret Service until he was called to the ministry at the age of thirty-three. Ordained in 1905 after study at Emory and Vanderbilt, he served in the Georgia Conference for a short while before transferring to the Florida Conference on account of his wife's health. When he retired, the Rev. Wright returned to Atlanta, where he became known as the "visiting preacher" because of his regular visits to the sick and shut-ins. (Journal of Florida Conference, 1960) The Rev. Wright was an energetic man and a diligent organizer, capable of supplying the leadership needed.



In addition to his regular services at Oviedo and Geneva, he undertook to preach twice monthly at Gabriella, near Goldenrod. He organized committees to carry on the work of the church, and they did such a good job that Wright's successor, Allan MacFarlan, praised the good organization of the church. (Report, Jan. 1924)

The Wrights were handy at doing many of the jobs required at the rural church and parsonage. In 1920 the Rev. Wright and his sons Louis, Reverdy, and Olin worked alongside Joseph Leinhart and W.P. Carter in repairing parts of the church. Olin Wright also served as church sexton.

At the beginning of his third year as pastor, the Rev. Wright organized the Official Board and instituted for the first time a pledge and budget system. (Report, Jan. 1921) His concerns, however, went beyond mere organizational details. He found cause to complain in July 1921 that "the spiritual condition of the church is far from being what it should be." A two-week revival by Dr. S.W. Walker of Sanford was his way of trying to supply this spiritual lack. Dr. Walker's sermons were described as "some strong logical Gospel preaching" and "unusually plain, forceful, and spiritual," but bad weather kept attendance small. (Report, July 1921)

The Rev. Wright was more optimistic at the outset of his fourth year, 1922. He found "that the spiritual condition of the church is advancing" Report, (Jan. 1922) with "stronger cooperation and sweeter fellowship between the people" (Report, March 1922) That same year, in April, Oviedo had the distinction of serving as host of the District Conference. Guests were entertained in members' homes, and all enjoyed a picnic dinner together at the church. By that time the charge-- Oviedo and Geneva--had grown to 142 members and was paying the pastor an annual salary of \$1500. (Report, 1923)

Few repairs had been made on the church since it was moved in 1887, so in 1920 a repairs committee was appointed, with Mrs. T.W. Lawton as chairman. Mrs. Lawton reported on October 31 that rostrums had been built for the choir and the preacher, that a window at the back had been made into a door, and that the woodwork had been varnished. Work on the walls, however, had to be put off until Mr. O.G. Wolcott could repair the foundations. The work was finally completed by July 1921.

Until 1920 lighting in the church had been provided by kerosene lamps, which had to be cleaned after every use. On April 21 of that year the church met to consider new lamps.

Upon learning that a "Delco" battery system--used in fifty or sixty homes in Oviedo--would cost \$600, the members voted in favor of the Rev. Wright's recommendation that they purchase three Aladdin gas lamps. This form of lighting would be used until 1927, when the church was wired for electricity.

The early 1920's--the last years on the circuit, except for a time during World War II--were years of transition. The church grew in numbers, the church building was expanded in size, and Oviedo began to see a new prosperity.

Those added to the rolls between 1920 and 1927 included Mrs. Lily Wainright, Spencer R. Wainright, W. Joseph Lawton, Jr., Gladys Kelsey, Eleanor Wainright, Bennie Wainright, Mr. and Mrs. C.D. Mariner, Edith Mariner, Mr. and Mrs. C.R. Clonts, Charlie West, Dorothy Lee, Charlotte Lawton, Sparks Lee Lingo, Henry Wolcott, Mr. and Mrs. Oreon Burnett, Charles T. Niblack, Mrs. B.G. Smith, H.J. Laney, Mrs. O.H. Spencer, Willie Spencer, C.J. Spencer, and Clara Lee Wheeler.

The church building was too small for the growing membership, and plans were made for Sunday school rooms (classes at that time were scattered around the sanctuary). Money for the new rooms was almost all "in sight," according to the Rev. MacFarlan, but the Rev. MacFarlan ended his period of service at Oviedo before the construction could start. He said in his final report: "Our work, while in many ways it has been pleasant, has been far from what we would have had it. This closes our work here, with hopes that he who follows will be able to do more and better work."

In 1925 six Sunday school rooms and a balcony were added in back of the sanctuary. C.R. Clonts, as building committee chairman, worked closely with A.B. Kimble and C.W. Abell in drawing up the plans and supervising the construction. Some work was done by volunteer labor, and most of it had to be done in the summer, the off-season for the farmers.

There were fifteen or twenty workers in all and each volunteer worked at what he could do best. Mr. Clonts recalls one holiday when they were putting in wooden laths and ran out of nails. He went to the home of a local storekeeper to get him to open his hardware store and sell him some nails. The store-owner went, but over the objections of his wife, who protested his going to the store on a holiday.

One afternoon the workmen began plastering the walls, with the assistance of professional plasterers, and they went home that night confident that another day's work would finish the



rooms. They were perplexed the next morning to find small holes in their fresh plaster. After some "detective work" had failed to solve the mystery, somebody noticed a busy (and probably confused) dirt-dauber struggling to finish a hard-packed nest made from the missing plaster.

The little congregation did not ignore its responsibilities to the needy. One report by Mrs. O.G. Wolcott, Social Services Chairman and a registered nurse, tells of the kind of charitable work that was being done in these days before the existence of a public health clinic:

Flowers sent to sick and shut-ins - 20 to 50 bouquets  
Food sent to sick - trays - dishes - fruit, etc. - 20  
Doctored sick babies when Dr. was out of town - 28  
Spent one whole day at Long Distance phoning for sick neighbors and walked about 5 miles carrying messages. Loaned car to sick neighbor to see a Doctor. Sent ice to three or four sick Negroes. Gave \$2.00 in cash and \$1.00 worth of food to needy family - cared for surgical case out of hospital for ten days - sent supper to family of six people in trouble.

The Epworth League in 1924 was praised as one of the best in the district. However, less than a year later its meetings were temporarily suspended because of a lag in attendance and a lack of adult leadership. In other ways the religious spirit of the church was very much alive. Prayer meetings continued every Wednesday night. In June 1925 a tent revival held by the Methodist and Baptist churches together proved so successful that it lasted two weeks.

Foster Chapel took pride in its music. Mrs. T.W. Lawton had succeeded Mrs. H.B. McCall as organist in 1919, and Mrs. T.L. Lingo had become the organist in the early 1920's. The Oviedo Observer for August 20, 1926, tells of a sacred concert at the Methodist Church featuring Mrs. Lingo, Verne Sley, Joseph Leinhart, Mrs. W.J. Lawton, Mrs. J.W. Martin, Mrs. T.W. Lawton, George Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. W.P. Carter, and others. In January 1926 the circuit reported 145 members. Oviedo, with a congregation of about eighty, considered itself ready to become an independent station. On April 17, 1927, the Foster Chapel congregation voted to become a station, and the church was so designated by the Annual Conference in June. Fifty-four years on the circuit had come to an end.

Years of prosperity and change lay ahead. Celery was to become a main crop of the community, along with citrus. In



slow and subtle ways, the placid life of the first half century would slip away. "We don't have as much time now as we used to have," ruefully remarks one of the older members of the church. The church would maintain for many years much of its harmony, its closeness among members, but the automobile, the Great Depression, the radio and television, and World War II would bring many changes. In 1927 most of these things were farther away than any human eye could see.

**A TIME TO EVERY PURPOSE**  
**1927-1973**

Donna M. Neely

The Rev. C.W. Mathison, pastor during the Oviedo church's first four years as a station, reported that "the general state of the church is good. The spirit of charity, patience and worship pervades the church. The children are being instructed through the Sunday school, the League, and junior church. The League is doing well with good attendance and interest. Worship and other programs are being followed carefully...The Missionary Society is filling the need in the field occupied by it and is doing good work." (Records, 1930)

The Rev. Mathison instituted a newsletter that added a certain spice to the life of the quiet community. People would crowd around the post office when the letters came out, waiting to read his outspoken observations on the behavior of citizens of Oviedo.

From 1931 to 1936 the minister was Dr. W.J. Carpenter, who initiated the tradition of Homecoming. Oviedo was Dr. Carpenter's last charge before he retired in 1936. Several years after his retirement he was invited to preach at a Homecoming service. He had not been back to Oviedo for even a visit in the meantime. While his health was still good, Dr. Carpenter had begun to lose his keen hearing; however, he had retained his keen sense of humor.

Homecoming Sunday arrived. Dr. Carpenter was introduced at the morning worship service. He rose, walked to

the pulpit, and looked out over the congregation. Without a trace of a smile he said, "You people haven't changed at all. You look just the same as you did when I was here as your minister. But now you talk so low I can hardly hear you!" To the amusement of the congregation, he added that he noticed the same people were still sleeping through the church services.

In the late 1920's these names were added to the church membership roll: Mr. and Mrs. E.F. Mitchem, Mr. and Mrs. W.T. Chance, Mr. and Mrs. A.M. Stuart, Lois Mitchem, Miss Joyce Wainwright, Edward Jordan, and Laddie Mariner.

The pastor's report of April 1932 states that "there are several members coming now to worship who have been careless in this respect for some time." Lack of adult leadership continued to plague the Epworth League, resulting in poor attendance and often no meeting at all. The president of the League, Charlotte Lawton, made an urgent plea at the quarterly conference for an adult leader. (Records, 1932)

In the spring of 1934 the parsonage was renovated. The walls were replastered and painted, the floors refinished in some rooms, and some of the furnishings were replaced. The church steeple was struck by lightning, as it had been a number of times before. A year later a new roof was put on the church. The inside of the building was replastered and the large windows repaired and weighted. More Sunday school rooms were added under the supervision of C.R. Clonts.

But before long the Sunday school membership had outgrown the rooms available in the church building. In addition to this the Boy Scouts needed a suitable place in which to meet. Consequently, a "log cabin room" was built back of the Sunday school classrooms. A roomy, primitive structure, its total cost was \$70; and it served to augment the regular church school rooms for several years.

The church added these names to its roll in the 1930's: Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Meek, Louise Wheeler, Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Kimble, R.S. Mitchell, John Mitchell, Pennie and Curtis Mitchem, T.L. Lingo, Jr., Naomi McCulley, Margaret McCulley, Charles LeRoy Clonts, Thelma Lee, Mrs. and Mrs. Charles L. West and family, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Talbott, Mr. and Mrs. Mills M. Lord, Jr., June Mariner, Pauline Mills, Barbara Lee, Mrs. Mary Daul, Mrs. Martha Leinhart, Mr. and Mrs. R.W. Estes, Mr. and Mrs. M.L. Gary, Mr. and Mrs. A.R. Tingley, Henry Wolcott, Mrs. Grace Lee, Theodore and Anson B. Kimble, Ben Wainwright, Allen Hunt, Mrs. H.R. Hunt, Robert





Capt. Meredith Brock (right) with J. J. King (center) on the western shore of Lake Charm. The railroad tracks in the foreground were those of the Atlantic Coastline Railroad which served Oviedo during the 1890's.



Mr. J. H. Lee



Mrs. J. H. Lee



Children of J. H. King (1902): Anita, age 14; Martha, age 12; Nell, age 10.





Mr. J. H. King



Dr. Henry Foster



Mrs. Henry Foster





The upper photograph shows Foster Chapel about 1900, and the lower shows the sanctuary decorated for a wedding in 1908. Note the wood stove and the original stained glass windows, which were red and green.







Both of these photographs show the church about 1950. The steeple had been removed in the 1930's, and the doors replaced the windows in the back of the sanctuary about 1920. The pulpit, pews, and altar rail were the same, and most of the stained glass windows remained.







The Rev. Jesse Waller, District Superintendent; the Rev. George Carlton; and the Rev. J. W. Austin, a former pastor, at ground-breaking for the new church.



The Rev. Jesse Waller; Mr. Paul Campbell, builder of the church; the Rev. George Carlton; Mr. T. L. Lingo; and Mrs. Clara Mariner.





Dedication of the new church. Left to right: the Rev. J. W. Austin, Bishop John Branscomb, George Morgan, the Rev. Jesse Waller (District Superintendent) and the Rev. George Carlton.



Mr. T. L. Lingo Sr.



Mrs. T. L. Lingo Sr.





The wedding of Ann Leinhart and Erwin Abell, the first wedding in the new church. Left to right: Wiley Abell; the bridegroom and bride; Maxine Latimer; Lex Abell; Johnny Jones; and flower girls, Kathy Staley and Pat Lee (Jarvie).



The First United Methodist Church as it is today.



James Lawton, Mrs. Willie Sloan, J. Partin, Josh Beasley, Marguerite Parsons, Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Staley and family, Mrs. Irwin Malcolm, Mr. and Mrs. E.M. Olliff and family, Mr. and Mrs. J.W. McKinnon, Mrs. Caroline Carter, and Mrs. G.S. Moon.

The decade of the thirties saw many changes, some more welcome than others. When World War II seemed imminent there was a sharp drop in both church and church school attendance. Some members left the community to serve in the armed forces; others left to take defense jobs in larger cities. The addresses of servicemen were regularly listed in the Sunday bulletin. Church members were urged to write to them and pray for them, strengthening their ties with home.

Those from Foster Chapel who served in World War II were: Chester Allen, Roy Clonts, Herbert Duval, Al Hunt, Edward Jordan, Emmett Kelsey, A.B. Kimble, Jr., Charles S. Lee, Jr., Thomas Moon, Reese Moon, Charles Olliff, Eugene Olliff, Leon Olliff, Arthur Partin, Merritt Staley, George Talbott, Tommy Staley, and Billy West. Eugene Olliff and Arthur Partin died in the service of their country. Roy Clonts, a pilot in Europe, returned from war after being reported missing for three months.

In spite of the war the church moved on, with the Rev. John W. Hager as pastor. He was assigned to Oviedo in 1939 and refers to his Oviedo appointment as "the one 'town and country' experience in my ministry." Soon after his appointment, the Rev. Hager preached a sermon in which he made reference to the "Cedars of Lebanon." Many of the church members were celery farmers; they assumed at first that he was referring to "seeders" instead of "cedars." They mentioned it to the Rev. Hager when the service was over, chuckling about the unintentional pun. The pastor later remarked that this was, to him, a valuable lesson in communication. "The worshipper in the pew always hears what is said from the pulpit through the grid of his own experiences" (Letter, 1973).

After leaving Oviedo the Hagers adopted identical twins through the Methodist Children's Home in Lake Bluff, Illinois. They are the well-known Hager twins who have been featured on the television program, "Hee Haw."

A seminary friend of the Rev. Hager, the Rev. John L. Hones, dropped out of school to finish the three months remaining when Mr. Hager returned to Emory University. His pastorate, which paid him \$100 a month, was the shortest in the



history of the Oviedo church, but a turning point in his life. While here, he was influenced by the District Superintendent, Dr. Wicker, to change his membership from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and to join the Florida Conference; and he met and married Dorothy Lee, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C.S. Lee. (Letter, 1973)

C.L. Spottswood, who succeeded the Rev. Jones in 1942, served Oviedo as its pastor for only four months, the second shortest ministry the church has known. But the Rev. Spottswood's influence was far from short-lived. He became missionary to the Phillippines, and the church as well as many of its individual members have kept in touch with "Spotty" ever since. The church has supported him both financially and spiritually. From time to time he sends photographs of his family, and letters about his activities in the mission field. When on furlough he has returned to Oviedo to visit and preach.

After the Rev. Spottswood came Lionel T. Nelson, who was minister at Oviedo twice--once in 1942-1944, and again in 1947-1948. The three intervening years he spent as a chaplain in the United States Air Force.

The Rev. Nelson's memories of this church are many and colorful. While he was here the church was cleaned by an old Negro preacher whom everyone called Preacher Edwards. In payment for this custodial service the Rev. Nelson would speak in Preacher Edwards' church from time to time. "One Sunday we had been particularly bothered by a woodpecker on our tin roof and I remember determining during the course of that sermon to get rid of it on Monday. And I had a 22 rifle which I had purchased somewhere; and I went out to the church, sat there, and waited for the return of the woodpecker, because I was going to see that he wasn't going to bother us another Sunday and during that time Preacher Edwards was cleaning around the church--trimming bushes and so forth--and we never really lived that story down, because people said I was standing over him with my gun in order to get the work done. It was never true, or course, because we had such great and cordial relations with all people in the community" (Tape recording from L. Nelson, 1973)

He recalls long, hot summer nights before air-conditioning, when through his open windows he could hear the click of cue balls, indicating a billiard game in progress on a neighboring porch. He remembers looking out of the windows of his office on

the first floor of the parsonage and seeing Frank Talbott daily tending the flowers around his house. And then there was Mrs. Talbott, frustrated in her constant battle with weeds that grew in spite of all her efforts to get rid of them.

Perhaps the most harrowing experience during his residence in Oviedo happened to the Rev. Nelson on a chilly winter morning. One of his chores was to light the oil heater so that the church would be warm when everyone else arrived. He usually did this around three or four A.M., dressed in pajamas and robe, and making his way with a flashlight. On one particular Sunday he went to the church, opened the double doors, crossed the foyer, and started into the darkened sanctuary. There he stumbled over the bodies of two sleeping men. There is some doubt as to who was more surprised--he or the startled strangers who had wandered into the unlocked church to find shelter for the night.

As the war continued, a church newsletter was sent monthly to the servicemen. In 1943 a building drive netted almost \$55,000. Gifts to the church were generous; donors were able to make substantial tax savings by their giving, while at the same time contributing toward the new church. It was apparent that a new church building would be needed before long. But the building program was delayed, both because of wartime restrictions on strategic building materials and because of the scarcity of labor. Consequently the money from the drive was invested in government bonds until such time as the restrictions eased. By this time the church membership had reached 223.

The three years of the Rev. Nelson's absence as chaplain were filled by two pastors. The first was the Rev. Nath Thompson, who came to Oviedo in October of 1944, after he had officially retired. He is said to have had "a talent for people." He was the originator of the children's sermon, a practice which became another of the church's traditions for more than two decades. "Uncle Nath," as he was often called, affectionately referred to his wife as "Miss Sarah," who was a vibrant and colorful person in her own right. Lionel Nelson recalls that she had "many bottles of colored water which she left in the parsonage windows." (Tape, 1973) Mrs. Thompson is also reputed to have been censured by members of the Casselberry church for openly wearing earrings and rouge.

The Thompsons left Oviedo in the middle of the conference year. Uncle Nath was replaced by J. Milburn McLeod, who had



received an interim appointment following his discharge as a chaplain in the armed forces. In retrospect, the Rev. McLeod notes that "it was a period of adjustment for everyone. Both (Oviedo and Geneva) churches seemed to be settling down and getting ready for the 'future shock' of growth and expansion which now appears to be a reality" (Letter, 1973).

Next came the Rev. G.W. Hutchinson, who served as pastor from 1946-1947. While he was here, Mrs. Hutchinson died (Jan. 5, 1947). She had achieved recognition in Methodism, having written several hymns and created two hymnal calendars designed for use in daily devotions.

In 1948 the Rev. Hutchinson was succeeded by the Rev. John T. Adams, Jr., who quickly became known to everyone as "Jack." The church remained free of financial problems. A new parsonage was sorely needed, but the trustees hoping that the cost of construction would not continue to rise, decided to postpone the building of the parsonage for a while longer. So the Adams family cheerfully remained in the old parsonage.

During his ministry the Rev. Adams prevailed upon Walter Teague to teach the Men's Bible Class "temporarily." Walter agreed, and his temporary teaching post stretched to a period of twenty-five years. Through summer and winter, the class met for many years under the large oak tree that stood between the old church and the present parsonage.

The Homecoming tradition begun by Dr. Carpenter had by this time become a day of many visitors to the Oviedo church. The wooden benches serving as pews were lifted out through the large church windows and set under the oak tree. Later, packing boxes replaced the benches to a great extent. (At this writing the usual wooden packing boxes for citrus have now become a thing of the past; once more the old benches are moved outside, this time from their place in the youth building.) But in the forties, as now, there was food and fellowship in abundance on homecoming Sunday. The Rev. Dick Blanchard tells about one Homecoming in the early fifties, when Bishop Branscomb and the entire Blanchard family were among those attending the Homecoming service. Afterward they stayed to have dinner on the grounds. The Blanchards had brought their infant son, Rick, who slept peacefully in a bassinet covered with mosquito netting, right in the middle of all the bustle of the dinner. Later, when the Rev. Blanchard carried Rick into the church nursery, he noticed an unusual wall decoration. There amid an assortment of babies--some sleeping, some crying,



some wet, some dry--a nursery-keeper with a flair for needlework and a knowledge of the Bible had hung a sampler on the wall with this quotation from Paul: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed"! (from a sermon, 1973).

Many familiar names appeared on the church rolls in the 1940's. Among them were: Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Moon, Mrs. Wynona Fairecloth, Mrs. J.H. Lee, Jr., Mrs. J.A. Partin, Mrs. Hattie Jordan, Mrs. Louise Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Meek and family, A.M. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Jones, Mr. and Mrs. T.B. Clonts, Mr. and Mrs. Jack King, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Teague and family, James Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Don Ulrey and family, Herley Mae Wainwright, Mrs. Nell Morgan, Shirley Jones, Mrs. Juanita Beasley, John W. Evans, Ann Leinhart, Jane Moon, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Shaffer and family, Margaret Wolcott, Mr. and Mrs. D.C. Hickson, Mr. and Mrs. William Lundy, Mr. and Mrs. James E. Pearson, and Mr. and Mrs. John Courier.

### **A TIME TO BUILD**

In 1950 the need for a new parsonage took priority over a church building. Part of the money secured in the 1943 building fund drive was allocated for that purpose, and the present parsonage was built at a cost of \$16,000. On April 21, 1951, the Rev. E.T. Standifer and his family moved in. Since that time the parsonage has had several modifications and additions. The old parsonage was moved to a site further west on King Street, where it stands today.

The Standifers had come to Oviedo in 1950. Their son, Bobby, was later to be the first, and to date the only church member from Oviedo to enter the Methodist ministry. Dan Beistel recalls that while the Standifers lived in Oviedo, young Bobby and his friends had a favorite pre-service pastime on Sunday mornings. They gathered tangerines from the grove across the street and would roll them down the blacktop in front of the church. As the tangerines rolled along they absorbed heat from the road, and eventually burst. It seems the boys had developed their own adaptation of skipping stones.

The building fund, depleted by the construction of the parsonage, was again increased by gifts during the next five years. By the spring of 1955 the fund totaled just over \$90,000. This was the figure decided upon as the goal to be reached before the construction of a new church could begin. It was then

that an incident occurred which impressed upon the members the urgency for the replacement of the church building. At the back of the old sanctuary, chairs were lined against the wall to accommodate the overflow from the pews. It had become customary for Reese Moon to sit there; it was also his habit to tilt his chair back so that it rested on only two legs. During a Sunday morning sermon the floor gave way beneath the chair, dumping Reese unceremoniously to the floor. The hole caused by the mishap was small, and Reese was unhurt; but it might be said that Reese "opened the way" for the construction of the new sanctuary.

The trustees consulted an architect, Gamble Rogers. They told him how much money was available; they asked Mr. Rogers to draw up plans which would provide the best possible building for \$100,000. Mr. Rogers complied. A special meeting of the quarterly conference was called following the morning worship service on January 2, 1955. C.R. Clonts, once again as building committee chairman, presented the plans and sketches of the proposed church. George Morgan urged that the members approve the plans, subject to minor revisions. The conference acted upon Mr. Morgan's suggestion, approving the plans without a single opposing vote (Report, 1955).

Paul Campbell, a member of the church, was awarded the building contract. For the first time in the church's history, no volunteer labor was used. Mr. Campbell subcontracted some of the work. Will Scott, who occasionally attended the Oviedo church, laid the brick and the concrete blocks. Architect Rogers donated his services in partial supervision of the actual construction. (Mr. Campbell later gave half of what he made on the construction back to the Methodist church; the other half he gave to the Baptist church.)

Groundbreaking for the sanctuary and the first unit of the educational rooms was held on July 10, 1955. The new church was to be built just west of the old Foster Chapel. In the months that followed, church members and community alike watched with interest and loving concern as the masses of brick on the church grounds were transformed into the building that was later to be considered one of the most beautiful churches in the area. When finished, the church carried a total construction cost of \$145,000. As yet it had no steeple.

On Wednesday evening, June 13, 1956, the church members met for the first service in the new sanctuary. An Allen organ, a gift to the church, had been installed to provide music for the

worshippers. It was a proud moment for the many people who had worked for so long to see their dream of a new church realized. To have a debt-free church was indeed an accomplishment. Yet some who had shared the dream had not lived to see it realized. The church "Book of Memories" lists four members "who contributed to the construction of the new church, but were not privileged, in this life, to see its completion": Charles Roy Clonts, Jr., William Asbury Meek, James Enoch Partin, and Margie Lundy.

The following Friday evening the first wedding took place in the sanctuary. Ann Leinhart and Erwin Abell were married, with the Rev. George H. Carlton officiating. Some of the furnishings of the new church were not yet in place, and some of the wedding guests sat on the wooden benches which had been used in the old church.

The cornerstone of the building was laid on March 3, 1957. In its cavity was placed a copper box containing mementoes of the time--coins, administrative board minutes, and pictures of young members who had recently been baptized--Susan Clonts, Linda Olliff, and Fay Stoner.

The church building was officially dedicated on April 7, 1957, following a brief morning worship service. The dedication was conducted by Bishop John W. Branscomb who was assisted by district superintendent, Dr. Jesse E. Waller, and the Rev. George H. Carlton, pastor of the church. The structure was duly named the First Methodist Church of Oviedo. Church members and visitors had dinner on the grounds afterward.

The building program, together with other accomplishments that year, earned the First Methodist Church of Oviedo the "Rural Church of the Year" award from the Florida Conference in 1957.

The church school enrollment continued to rise; consideration was given to building the wing which would house the nursery and the primary rooms. But there was now only \$16,000 left in the building fund. The old church was still being used as a fellowship hall and a church school building. Already an addition to the new building was badly needed.

In the spring of 1957 the Bethany Circle sponsored a "Church School Building Loyalty Fund" supper. Circle members provided the food and all church members were invited. \$29,000 was raised in cash and pledges at the supper. This meant that the next phase of building could begin. The construction included covered walkways to the wing, a kitchen, a fellowship



hall, a nursery, and several church school rooms. After this phase of the building was completed the old Foster Chapel was moved to a new site on Lake Jessup Avenue several blocks north of the church grounds, where it was remodeled into the residence of Mr. and Mrs. R.L. Slavik.

Meanwhile an irrigation system for the church and parsonage grounds was installed. The youth building, a gift from Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, Sr., was completed. On March 8, 1959, the youth building was dedicated in a service led by the district superintendent, Dr. Jesse E. Waller.

In the decade from 1940 to 1950 the church had grown at an increasingly rapid rate. Among those who became members in the 1950's were: Bryant and Eugene Hickson, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Slavik, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest L. Luttrell, Dr. and Mrs. E.W. Stoner, Mr. and Mrs. James E. Brookshire, Miss Lucille Brookshire, Mr. and Mrs. George A. Kelsey, Mr. and Mrs. Elbert Cross, Mrs. James F. Pearson, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Slavik, Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Neely, Martin L. Kelsey, Mrs. Harvey Kelsey, James Partin and family, Esther Beistel, Mr. and Mrs. S.P.H. Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. W.H. DeShazo and family, Mr. and Mrs. Robert McCallister, Mr. and Mrs. John Lundy and family, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Neely and family, Mr. and Mrs. John T. Coe and family, Mrs. T.L. Lingo, Jr. and family, Mr. and Mrs. Foye Shull and family, Mr. and Mrs. Reese Moon, Mr. and Mrs. John Piloian, Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Harris, Mr. and Mrs. L.L. Faulk and family, Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Ellis, Mr. and Mrs. L.H. Webb and family, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald P. Smith, and Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Saucer and family.

George Carlton completed his ministry in Oviedo in June, 1961, having served since 1954. His is the longest ministry in the history of the church. He was succeeded by Ben R. Blackburn, who served for one year, and then Robert Soka. The Rev. Soka was a talented musician, a former night club entertainer; and in addition to his ministerial duties he often played the piano for both church and community affairs. Late in his second year at Oviedo he accepted another charge.

During the Rev. Soka's ministry the steeple was added to the church. Instead of being built piecemeal atop the church, the entire steeple was hoisted into place at one time by a large crane. Many of the church members left their jobs, their housework, and their recreation to come to watch the "steeple-raising." Cameras of all descriptions clicked busily away as the cumbersome steeple inched skyward. Two hours after the job had begun, all that remained to be done was

the final securing of the steeple to the main structure, and some exterior finishing where building and steeple were joined.

In 1964 the 15 acres of land on King Street which lay beyond what is now the Little League field were sold to the Board of Public Instruction for a school site. This land was part of the original parcel given to the church years before by the Mitchell family. The church had in the meantime added another parcel. Mrs. George Morgan had given the land across the street from the church for a parking lot. (It was also to be the scene of all of the Homecoming dinners to come.)

Meanwhile, the vacancy left by the Rev. Soka had been filled by Cyrus B. Dawsey, a missionary on furlough from Brazil. The Dawseys had four children; and like all parsonage families before them, they were immediately absorbed into the life of the community.

"Cy" still remembers how the parsonage refrigerator was usually full of bass, and he speaks of the unforgettable hours at the Lake Pickett cottages of the Morgans and the Evanses. He and Marshlea recall the many out-of-town visitors to the parsonage, and the Dawseys' delight in showing off the celery farms, which were a novelty to many of their visitors.

"Speaking of kindnesses...our neighbors were the best...the Talbotts, right behind us, sharing their garden, their flowers, and always that delicious orange tree where we never let any to go waste...and the McKinnons across from the Morgans...and a little further away Mrs. Estes and her delicious cooking...so many times a surprise for supper...Roosevelt, the farm helper from the Wheelers, who often appeared in our back yard with his truck loaded down with vegetables...and the Clonts family with that delicious corn...none like it anywhere else in the world...fruitcakes so special from Martha Leinhart...Madeline Luttrell's surprises...Mrs. Gary's and Mrs. Clonts' pound cakes...the hours that Claire Evans, Mrs. Clonts, and Jim Wilson spent in the yard, making a beautiful world to surround our house...and dear Mr. (Lynn) Neely, the custodian and friend of the family...the Brunswick stews of Mr. (L.L.) Faulk...the Martins' generosity with their swimming pool...Dr. Stoner, who was a real friend as well as a doctor...the happy times in the homes of the members...the sad times..."

The Dawseys consider their most lingering blessing to be the marriage of their oldest son, Sonny, to Barbara Saucer of the Oviedo Church. They are proud of the two grandchildren with whom they have been also blessed. (Letter, 1973)



During the latter part of their stay here, Marshlea Dawsey was the church's director of Christian education. By March of 1966 the Dawseys were ready to return to Brazil.

The church continued to expand its activities. Once again the men of the church began meeting together after many years without a formal organization. With the help of Tom Fuller, Ed Carpenter and other interested members, the Methodist Men's Club was formed. It sponsored a churchwide recreational and spiritual program as well as a community scouting program. Evening meetings were not feasible, so the men had breakfast meetings at a local restaurant.

Suzanne Partin became the church's first Summer Youth Director. Leon Olliff and Merritt Staley became certified as lay speakers.

Through the years of the early sixties, the church had acquired a rather unusual church member. For the church and the parsonage families had been "adopted," not by the proverbial church mice, but by a cat. Because of his Methodist leanings, he was named, appropriately enough, John Wesley.

"No one knows just exactly where John came from, how old he is, or anything else about him. He just appeared about five years ago at the parsonage, and from then on became a part of the parsonage, handed from minister to minister.

"John is always the first one to choir practice every Wednesday night. Even though the choir members try to keep him out for fear he will be locked in the sanctuary overnight, as he has been on several occasions, he almost always manages to get inside.

"John, though not by his own wishes, is kept out of the sanctuary during church services Sunday morning. Once though he slipped by the ushers and made it up to the front of the church by the altar before he was apprehended and removed.

"Once again John became the object of attention this past Easter during the sunrise services. The day before the children had been on an Easter egg hunt by the youth building, where the sunrise services were to be held. Somehow one of the eggs wasn't found by any of the children and John discovered its presence near Rev. Jernigan (minister of the Baptist church), who at the time was delivering the sermon. John proceeded to play with his find on the sidewalk during the services.

"A friend to all the children, John receives the same treatment that all the human members of the church get. When



John had been injured in an argument with one of his feline friends, he had to go to the hospital. As with any other member it was announced in church that John was in the hospital and that everyone hoped for a speedy recovery for him." (Larry Neely, The Sanford Herald, 1967) One day in 1969, Ann Abell, the church secretary, found John dead, the victim of an automobile.

Successor to the Rev. Dawsey was Robert R. Barber. The summer of his first year at Oviedo, he received the "Minister of the Year" award at Emory University. This is an honor awarded one minister from each denomination from the state of Florida on behalf of Progressive Farm magazine. By the end of the Rev. Barber's second year in this church, the plans were well under way for a new university to be built near Oviedo. He remembers it as a time of preparation and dreaming, with no one knowing how much the community and church were to be affected. (Letter, 1973)

The church itself had mixed opinions as to the desirability of a more cosmopolitan church body. The pastor found two distinct attitudes in his congregation toward the future: "There are those who ask and pray for things to remain as they are presently. There are those who eagerly desire and pray for change in the church and the community." (Records, 1967)

In 1966 the chancel area of the sanctuary was remodeled at a cost of just over \$7,000. A new Conn organ--a gift from the W.H. Martin family--was installed. The youth building and the parsonage were air-conditioned. The church made the land west of the youth building available for use by the Little League.

The church welcomed its fiftieth minister in 1968. The Rev. and Mrs. C.N. Ogg came to us from DeBary, and at once were impressed with the church building and parsonage. They remained at Oviedo for three years.

The highlight of this ministry was a visit by Dr. E. Stanley Jones to the church. The original purpose of Dr. Jones' visit was to bring the church members up to date on the conditions in India. "However, Dr. Jones always 'listened' before he stood before a congregation. (This time) God didn't tell him to speak on the political and economical or spiritual conditions in India. God impressed him to speak to us about our own spiritual needs. It was a most rewarding meeting..." (Letter from Mrs. C.N. Ogg, 1973). The church was packed, with the overflow from the pews sitting on folding chairs in the aisles and in the narthex.



Another major event during the Rev. Ogg's ministry here was the merging of the Methodist church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. The Oviedo church then became the First United Methodist Church of Oviedo. Aside from the change in name, the merging of the two churches had little effect upon the everyday affairs of the Oviedo church.

The Oggs' daughter, Janette, enriched many church services with her soprano solos and her direction of the children's choir. Professionally trained in Europe, Janette was a continual source of inspiration for those who heard her sing.

The growth of the community in the 1960's reflected an equal growth in church membership. Included in the additions to the church roll in that decade are: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gaydick and family, Max Leinhart, Mr. and Mrs. Bryant Hickson, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Banks, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Soball, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Bratton and family, Ruth Davidson, John Ridenour and family, Katherine McCall, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Culver, Joseph and Sherry Patton, Mr. and Mrs. Gus Lass, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Partin, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Stoner, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Fuller, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Slayton, Mr. and Mrs. John P. Goree and family, Mr. and Mrs. Wiley Abell, Mr. and Mrs. Don Weaver and family, Mr. and Mrs. John Conley, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Feinberg, Grace Murley, Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Mosier, Mr. and Mrs. Frazier Vail and family, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cameron and family, Dr. and Mrs. Richard Adicks and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Roger Slavik.

A. Bradford Dinsmore succeeded the Rev. Ogg in June of 1971; he is the present minister of the Oviedo church. Since 1970 the church has continued to grow and change. The current membership is almost 500; the church has a budget of over \$40,000. Many more individual families have joined the church family. They are: Mr. and Mrs. Roy Lanier and family, Mrs. Walter Rawlson and family, Mr. and Mrs. Donald K. Norman and family, Mr. and Mrs. David McGuire, Mrs. Gladys McGuire, Dr. and Mrs. Douglas Brumbaugh and family, Dr. and Mrs. Carson Kendall, Mrs. Delaine Dinsmore, Mr. and Mrs. Jimmie Addison, Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Vick and family, Dr. and Mrs. Carlos Warren and family, Richard L. Goodwin, David Edwards, Dr. and Mrs. Llewellyn Ehrhart, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Smith, Celia Hey, Erwin Abell, Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Osborne, Mary Henderson, Mr. and Mrs. Kirby Grant, Jr. and family, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Ruble, Grace Parks, Mr. and Mrs. James Doherty, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Beckner, Mr. and Mrs.



Harlin Barnett, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Rouse, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Kimrey, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Nesmith, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Scharf, Mildred K. Wright, Dr. and Mrs. Basil Hoover and family, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Gomer, Mrs. Mary Ann McGee, Mr. and Mrs. William Cook, Mr. and Mrs. Barry Leinhart and family, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Blackwood and family, Mr. and Mrs. David Thacker and family, Dr. and Mrs. Michael Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd DeGerald and family, and Lt. Col. and Mrs. Don Shaffer and family.

Since 1970 the church has broadened its scope in countless ways. A bus now provides transportation for the youth, children, and senior citizens. A pictorial church directory was issued in 1972. A newsletter is sent monthly to all church members, keeping them informed of meeting dates and church activities. A financial drive in 1971--Operation Ice Cube--assured the air-conditioning for the remainder of the church plant.

Even the casual observer, were he to browse through the written records of the church, could not fail to be impressed by the work of the many church members who have contributed to the growth and well being of the church in so many ways. Their names are legion; their dedication and loyalty are manifest in the offices they have held, the committees on which they have served, the church groups with which they have worked and prayed, and the manner in which they have represented the Oviedo church to the world at large.

### **A TIME TO SERVE**

Much of the time, service to God and the church cannot be expressed in terms of "filling an office." The little chores, the seemingly insignificant tasks have been quietly, unobtrusively performed by the church's unofficial stewards. Church members who have contributed in this way are almost without number. For example, there was James C. Wilson, building maintenance supervisor, chief groundskeeper and all-around handyman; and "Mack" McKinnon, electrician, plumber, and Mr. Fix-it. Still others are Don Ulrey and Harden Webb, who have seen service as climate control experts, and Lynn Neely, church custodian from 1963 to 1967. There are Mrs. C.T. Niblack, Pat Bratton, Pennie Olliff, Jane Moon, and Mrs. C.R. Clonts, supervising countless dinners and receptions for the church...Martha Leinhart, financial secretary and treasurer for almost 25 years, ably succeeding Mrs. W.P. Carter...Mrs. John



Evans, James Wilson, and Mrs. C.R. Clonts, acting as landscaping supervisors...Mrs. B.G. Smith, sending flowers to hospitalized members and shutins...to name them all would require far more space than is permitted here.

Each new minister as well as each visiting preacher, has at one time or another become acquainted with a firm but unofficial ordinance of the city. Known as Gary's Law, it is worded to the effect that "any church service conducted within the confines of this sanctuary must end promptly at twelve o'clock." The law's originator, former Mayor M.L. Gary, takes great pains to see that every minister assigned to the Oviedo church learns this law by heart as soon as possible. Visiting preachers are called to one side and given the same indoctrination. The law is frequently broken; and thus far no one knows exactly what the consequences of such a misdemeanor are, aside from having some of the congregation leave before the service is over.

### A TIME TO SING

The music ministry of the Oviedo Methodist Church has contributed much to the life of the church. It was after World War I before there was an official music director of choir. One of those whose service in music is the longest is Mrs. T.L. Lingo, Sr. She became a member of the church in 1917. From that time on until her retirement in 1966 she used her musical talent in the service of God. First she became pianist for the Sunday school; later she became church organist and served without pay throughout the years. Since 1966 the church organists have been John Farmer, Sheryl Vost, Janette Ogg, and Ruth Jurnigan. Guest organists have been Anne Martin, Dr. James Lawton, and Joanna Wallace. When the present organ was installed, Walter Kimble presented a special concert in its dedication. Present organist is Dr. F.E. Schoenbohm.

Shortly after World War I the church had a choir. Among those who sang were Mrs. Charles Lee, Mrs. Oreon Burnett, Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, Sr., Walter Carter, and Mrs. W.B. West. Mrs. Lee and Mrs. West are mentioned several times in the church records as having sung "lovely solos" at various church functions. The reed organ in Foster Chapel was played by Mrs. T.W. Lawton.

During World War I several of the church members had played in musical organizations of one kind or another. It was thought that the church would benefit by sing the talents of



these people. About 1924 a small group of musicians met every Friday evening at the T.W. Lawton residence to rehearse. Professor Fred Gifford directed and played violin. He was assisted by Mrs. T.W. Lawton on the piano, Joe Leinhart on French horn, Mrs. R.L. Croom as the second violinist, Ila Barton on drums, Walter L. Carter on the clarinet, Max Leinhart and W.J. Lawton, Jr., and V.H. Sley as cornet players, and H.J. Laney on the saxophone. This group played for Sunday-School services.

At the beginning of World War II another musical group came into the picture in the form of a youth choir led by Louise Martin. Partly because it was wartime and the young men had been called into military service; and partly because the recruiting of male voices in church choirs has always been difficult, this youth choir was an all-girl organization. The young ladies regularly provided special music at the Sunday evening services. They came to church early to practice before the service began. Their pianist was Mrs. J.H. Staley, who continued to play for Sunday evening services until they were discontinued in the early seventies.

There have been children's choirs periodically throughout the church's history. For the most part these choirs have sung at special programs, or have taken part in the Sunday morning worship. The music ministry has been further enriched by the services of Dr. James Lawton and Helen Leinhart, both of whom have cheerfully provided last-minute accompaniment for the choir when the need arose.

The present choir has long had the reputation of being one of the best of its size in Central Florida. Mrs. Wm. H. Martin became its director when the youth choir was dissolved; she served continuously in that capacity for many years. Since the middle 1960's the directorship of the choir has been shared principally by Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Don Ulrey, and Mrs. L.H. Webb.

The members of the choir at the present time are: Pat Bratton, Dee Dinsmore, Homer Gerber, Bruce Hoover, Fannie May Hoover, Donna Neely, Leon Olliff, Marquise Patton, Jon Rawlson, Jessie Shaffer, Polly Saucer, Linda Slavik, Edna Staley, Merritt Staley, Fay Stoner, Gloria Taylor, Mildred Ulrey, Carlos Warren, and Harden Webb.

Others who have given many months of service to the music ministry are: Ann Abell, Mary Jean Carlton, Arthur Evans, Marshall Lingo, Earline Matthews, Roger Miller, Linda Miller, Mary Miller, Mrs. G.S. Moon, Dorothy Pearson, Jeannette Swenson, Don Ulrey, Gay Ulrey, and Jerry Ulrey.



## A TIME TO LEARN

When T.L. Lingo, Sr., first assumed the leadership of the Sunday School in 1919, he could not have known the role that religious education was to play in the church's history. When he became church school superintendent the enrollment was small and the educational ministry was directed toward one thing--Sunday School. For almost thirty years Mr. Lingo directed the work of the Sunday School, helping it grow and develop. As superintendent he set an example of Christian service. He took on almost any task around the church that needed doing, including the firing of heating stoves and the greeting of eleven o'clock worshippers. He retired in 1955, and his responsibilities were then shouldered by Merritt Staley, who was superintendent until 1958. He was followed in turn by Leon Olliff.

The educational ministry continues to grow in importance. The young people of the church have benefited from eight years of the summer youth program. The MYF has had capable leadership by many interested parents, among them Dr. and Mrs. Doug Brumbaugh, Mr. and Mrs. John Evans, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Beasley, Mr. and Mrs. Rex Clonts, W.H. DeShazo, Mr. and Mrs. John Day, Mr. and Mrs. Erwin Abell, Mr. and Mrs. John P. Goree, Madeline Luttrell, Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Martin, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Olliff, Mr. and Mrs. John Conley, Barbara Shaffer, Dr. and Mrs. E.W. Stoner, Mr. and Mrs. Frazier Vail, Mr. and Mrs. L.H. Webb, Mrs. Hazel West and Mr. and Mrs. Roy Lanier.

There have been two recent developments in the program for children. A junior church was established in 1972 under the leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Carson Kendall to serve the needs of the very young worshippers.

In 1972 plans were begun for an Early Childhood Center. Designed to accommodate forty three- and four-year olds, the Center would help to fill a community need in providing pre-school training and guidance for its children. After the initial paperwork was accomplished, a score of volunteers began to paint and refurbish classrooms in the educational wing, set up playground equipment, accumulate supplies, and make detailed preparations for the operation of the Center.

Under the supervision of Mrs. Carson Kendall the volunteers made headway. The teaching staff, composed of Linda DeGerald, Martha Goree, Hallie Scharf and Dale Williams spent many months in planning a program that would

provide the best possible instruction for the children. And in September 1973 the Early Childhood Center opened its doors for the first time with an enrollment of 37.

### A TIME TO REMEMBER

Throughout the years the Oviedo Methodist Church has kept its close ties with the Baptist church. In recent years this has taken the form of union services once more--at Thanksgiving and at Easter. The Thanksgiving service has traditionally alternated between the two churches. The sunrise Easter service was for many years observed by both churches on the shores of Lake Charm. Mrs. T.W. Lawton remembers the birds flying over the lake as the sun's first rays touched the treetops. T.L. Lingo, Sr., used to build a fire and make coffee for those who attended the services.

The observance at Easter sunrise was discontinued in the 1960's. However, inspired by the stories of services in years past, and eager to restore the tradition of the beautiful early morning service, Dr. and Mrs. Richard Adicks and Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Waltz were instrumental in re-establishing this tradition. In 1972 the sunrise services were resumed, this time with the cooperation of all the churches of Oviedo. At six o'clock, trumpets on the far side of the lake herald another Easter morning. Tapes, a portable organ, and a combined choir provide the music; and the ministers share in conducting the service. Once again the Easter sunrise service promises to become both an instrument for cooperation among the churches and a source of joy and inspiration for those who worship.

The church has other traditions--some old, some relatively new, some official, and some unofficial. There is the Chapel Guild Sunday School class and its Christmas card...the flower calendar and its contributors...the support of the missionaries--the Dawseys in Brazil, the Spottswoods in the Phillippines, and the Tindalls in Alaska...the food and gifts at Thanksgiving and Christmas for those in need...the acolytes lighting the candles for worship services...candlelight communion services on Good Friday and Christmas eve...New Year watch night services...24 hour prayer vigils...family night suppers...Saturday yard-work sessions...the Chrismon tree...promotion Sunday...revivals...the gift of a Bible to the children and the high school graduates...the cantatas presented by the choir...the annual recognition of the church school



workers...the renewal of marriage vows on Valentine Sunday...the honoring of the oldest--and youngest--mothers and fathers on their day...the single flower in the pulpit on Sunday morning, recognizing a new life in the church...the recognition of visitors at Sunday worship...The Christmas parties and the singing of carols...the altar filled with lilies at Easter and poinsettias at Christmas...the Bible study sessions...the prayer groups...the flower cross at Easter...vacation church school...and of course Homecoming with all its poignant memories.

### A TIME TO GROW

Many pages in this history have been devoted to the recording of dates and events concerning the church buildings and property. It must be remembered that these are but the outward manifestation of the faith, the loyalty, and the devotion of scores of individuals and groups, who throughout the life of the church have given of their material possessions, their time and effort, and their prayers in the furthering of God's work. The original tiny band of seven in 1873 has grown to an active membership of nearly 500 a century later. "Growth, both physically and spiritually, is the key word at First United Methodist Church of Oviedo. As change and growth come to this community the members of First Church are hard at work reaching out to both old and new community members, helping to blend into the fellowship of our church the heritage and values that have become the roots of this church and the newness and participation represented by those families now arriving. In every aspect of the church life the members of First Church faithfully witnessing [sic] to their commitment to our Lord." (Records, 1972)

A time to keep. A century to remember. It is our heritage cherish, our foundation to build upon, in the years to come.

## THE STORY OF THE WOMEN'S SOCIETY

(as told in Minute Books and Records)

The nineteenth century was the missionary century—and the women's century. One writer reminds us that our "nation was recovering from a terrible civil war; children were working ten hours a day in factories and longer in the fields; women had no political or economic rights; and millions around the world lived in poverty, ignorance, and without medical care."

One rainy, blustery March day in 1869, eight women met at the old Fremont Street church in Boston to organize the first Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. After a long period of prayer, study, and work they were finally able to send to India Isabella Thoburn, who began the first school for girls in that country, and Dr. Clara Swain, who established a woman's hospital.

And four years later the women of the Methodist Church in the south, in the midst of rebuilding their crushed region, reached out to others with their concern by coming together to begin a Missionary Society which eventually sent Miss Loche Rankin to China. Later, the women of the "Oviedo Foster Chaple," mostly Southerners living among people from the Southern and Northern traditions, showed this same concern for their neighbors at home and abroad.

These women who lived before we did grew up, married, had families, had problems that they cried over and prayed over, found courage in knowing other Christians who worked



out their faith from day to day, loved people, were made sad, were happy, laughed together, and lifted up their hearts in sacred moments to the One who had created them. They studied their Bibles, because Christian women usually consulted scripture before making decisions, and they found guidance in verses like these:

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep unspotted from the world" — Jas. 1:7

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" — Mark 16:15

"And now you have become living building-stones for God's use in building His house" — I Peter 2:5

"But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" —  
— Galatians 5:22-23

The minute books tell us the "List of members of the Methodist Workers" in October 1888, with their contributions paid monthly for the following year. From the twenty members \$16.25 was collected. Eleven honorary men members contributed eight dollars.

"Mrs. Lee donated a quilt to the Society for the Parsonage and two others were Quilted by the Society for the Parsonage."

Later, according to the record, "A call meeting was held at Mrs. Brock's to decide ways of raising money to buy Suit of Furniture for [the] Parsonage and it was decided to have ice cream and cake at the Pastors house August 1st from 3 to 6 o'clock P.M."

In January of 1893, "The Aid Society of Methodist Workers" elected "by ballot," Mrs. E. Brock for president, Mrs. L.N. Pritchard, vice president, Mrs. M.J. Moore, secretary, and Mrs. E. Anderson to whom "all dues [were] handed over" as treasurer.

The parsonage needs were still urgent and it was decided to have a supper "on Tuesday the 14th to raise Funds...The Society was encouraged in our weak effort and few in number by the aquisition of several valuable members, both honorable



and active. Also cheered by the presence of our pastor and wife." When the supper was over "\$17.75 was realized. Expenses paid by Treasurer for 45 lbs. ice - 95c, hauling 5c, for ham \$1.85. Whole amount expensed \$2.30. Leaving a net balance, realized from Supper of \$15.45" And a final note, "The ladies of the Society of Geneva, kindly donated a nice quilt for Parsonage."

Three long pages of furnishings were listed for the parsonage at this time—all furniture, linens, silver, utensils to the least pots and pans.

After the century turned there seemed to be a need to reorganize The Parsonage Aid Society. These early nine were Mrs. J.H. King, president; Mrs. H.B. McCall, vice-president; Mrs. Anderson, secretary; Mrs. Maxon; Mrs. J.H. Lee, Sr.; Mrs. Steinmeyer, the minister's wife and Mrs. McCall's mother; Mrs. Tanner; Miss Maude Steinmeyer; and Miss Irene Bell. They began by reading a chapter from the Bible. There was \$2.03 in the treasury. Reports were made to the church conference.

Interestingly, there were three honorary men members - the Reverend Steinmeyer, Mr. McCall, and Mr. King.

In 1913, when the churchwomen reorganized as the Aid Society, Mrs. McCall became president and Mrs. T.W. Lawton treasurer. Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Howard, and Mrs. Hope, the minister's wife, with her two daughters, Maggie and Jenny, were the others, and Monday afternoon was, at this time, established as the regular meeting time - "the first Monday after the first Sunday."

Some four years later the Saturday afternoon ice cream social was started down town to raise money to help support their work. Mrs. O.G. Wolcott was chairman.

Under the direction of their president, Mrs. L.R. Mitchell, in July 1919 the Society adopted the name of Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, South. Mrs. R.H. White at whose home they met, was elected vice president. Mrs. L.E. Wright, the minister's wife, was second vice president, Mrs. O.P. Swope third vice president, Mrs. C.S. Lee secretary and treasurer, and Mrs. W.P. Carter corresponding secretary. Other members were Mrs. B.G. Smith, Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, Mrs. T.W. Lawton, Mrs. W.J. Lawton, Mrs. H.J. McCulley, Mrs. C.L. West and Mrs. J.H. Lee. Everyone paid twenty cents and a list was kept. The three honorary men members who paid dues were the Rev. L.E. Wright, Mr. J.H. Lee and Mr. A.S. Cotton.



Three years later with the Missionary Society grown to twenty-two members, its activities foreshadowed the later Woman's Society of Christian Service organization. Boxes were being taken or sent to the orphanage, informational talks were being given by Mrs. Frank Norris and others on Buena Vista School and other institutions supported by the women. Mrs. L.R. Mitchell, a much admired former teacher, was the logical choice for directing the Junior Missionary Society which would later be carried on by Mrs. Clara Mariner.

Bible study was held each third Monday of the month, and Prayer Week was observed. Mrs. Lee was in charge one day and Mrs. Mariner the next. With Mrs. S.W. Swope as chairman of Home Work, special committees were appointed to visit the sick and to place flowers in the church. Mrs. F.B. Godfrey, secretary of the Orlando District, came to visit, and in her talk emphasized harmony in all work and "interesting and short programs"—a continuing need even now.

The treasurer reported at this 1922 meeting a balance of \$455.00, and there was "reading on payment of dues of olden times compared with present methods." During the visit of a later district secretary, Mrs. Overstreet, stress was placed on individual pledges. The financial records of the Society were scrupulously kept. Mrs. T.W. Lawton, as treasurer, asked for audited reports, a practice maintained by Mrs. Max Leinhart and Mrs. Joe Leinhart when they, in turn, became treasurer and still later by Mrs. Don Ulrey, Miss Elizabeth Olliff, Mrs. Ralph Neely, Mrs. Hardin Webb, and at present by Mrs. Brooks Madsen.

About this time was the first mention in the minutes of a publicity chairman, of mite box opening, and of the Epworth League for young people which later was under the faithful supervision of Mrs. Sparks Clonts. "The glory of missionary work is that it unites all good women from every state and country," said Miss Annie Mitchell. And a meeting was held at the church "on account of intense heat." The church had large electric ceiling fans.

In the early 1930's Mrs. A.M. Stewart felt that the younger women should have a part in missionary work. She organized what was called the Young Women's Society to meet as a group once a month and to join the older group from time to time for special meetings. This later developed into the Chapel Guild Circle. Among those original members who have contributed significantly to women's work in the church were Mrs. T.L.

Lingo in the music department; Mrs. W.R. Meek, Mrs. Lee Gary, with their special interest in maintaining an attractive parsonage; and Mrs. George Morgan, who was always a friend to parsonage families. It was Mrs. Morgan who gave the property across from the church which is traditionally used for the Homecoming dinner.

In January 1938 the regular monthly "meeting was opened with prayer by Grandmother Lee." This recurring emphasis on the cultivation of the inner life was further stated when she urged that members subscribe to the "Upper Room." Later this devotional quarterly was sent regularly to men at Raiford and to college students by Mrs. Grace Lee and other secretaries of student work.

During the war years of 1942-45 the resources of this inner strength were tested strenuously. Miss Alice Thayer, daughter of Dr. Henry Foster's chief of staff at Clifton Springs Sanitarium, was a happy winter-time link with former staunch supporters of Oviedo Christians. Among her various contributions to the church was the present pulpit Bible. Mrs. W.J. Lawton, as spiritual life chairman, regularly presented the concerns of the nations and of our own country, of the community and church, and of individuals for the prayers of all.

When the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Episcopal Church united in 1939, the name of the Women's Missionary Society was changed to Women's Society of Christian Service, appropriately describing service the group was rendering.

It was during this time of shoring-up that the church decided to set aside sums in war bonds for the much desired new church building, which would be finished under the leadership of Mr. C.R. Clonts, in 1956, and dedicated by Bishop Branscomb.

When the trying days ended and men returned from the service, the gratitude felt for the gift of peace expressed itself in a united and stronger church and Women's Society. At home the much beloved Rev. and Mrs. Nath Thompson, who had come from retirement in Georgia to shepherd our church when our pastor left for service, were relieved by Rev. Milburn McLeod, just returned from the chaplaincy in Europe. Ways were discussed for helping to feed the hungry, and boxes of clothing and CARE packages sent to countries in Europe and Asia. Money was sent to India to support a teacher for a year to teach Methodists there to read and write (thirty dollars). Recently one hundred dollars was sent to India for this same



purpose, the money being derived from interest on a bequest by Mrs. Oreon Burnett to the Women's Society for their work.

Circles were to direct their efforts towards mission work at home and abroad. Mary Martha Circle found ready work for able hands. Under the leadership of Mrs. W.P. Carter, Mrs. E.M. Olliff, Mrs. Enoch Partin, and Mrs. Lena Hunt, they sewed for Brewster Hospital in Jacksonville, for inner city mission work at Rosa Valdez center in Tampa, made bandages for Ghana Hospital in Liberia (where Vera Hughlett would teach nursing - also with our help - many years later), made cancer pads for Seminole County residents, collected coupons and funds for the Florida Methodist Children's Home in Enterprise, and urged "the educated mind" by planning and sponsoring a series of study courses each year with Mrs. Oreon Burnett and Mrs. J.H. Staley teaching.

Chapel Guild members had pioneered the departmentalized children's work in Sunday School under the direction of Mrs. C.T. Niblack, Mrs. Max Leinhart, Miss Kathryn Lawton and others, and in an extended session group known as the Busy Bees. Their interest in the world at large would express itself especially in their long and continuing support of the Rev. Spottswood's work in the Philippines, even to raising money for a radio for his plane. Mrs. R.W. Estes and Mrs. Charles G. Shaffer were untiring in their efforts now, and later as presidents of the Society.

There was a need for a night circle. This was soon filled with twenty-eight members known as the Bethany Circle. They accepted as their project the church nursery, which they helped to equip and took turns staffing on Sunday mornings. This was the group which, under Miss Kathryn Lawton and Mrs. W.H. Martin, would spark the drive to build a new parsonage (before the church itself), and with the help of Mrs. Rex Clonts and many others, would produce a church cookbook, the group that supported financial aid to foreign students at Florida Southern College, bringing a letter of appreciation from President Spivey. Their special interest in the individual led them to adopt the shy but delightful, elderly Mrs. Wiggins living alone in the country with no transportation. Even with Christmas parties, birthday showers, and taking her meals once a week they could not do as much for her as she did for them with her quiet happy faith as she shared her "blessed dimes" with each member a dime that she had asked God to bless through a special prayer.

Interest in children and young people are twin strands woven throughout the Women's work, surfacing in such personal ways as sending to the Children's Home pajamas, towels and linens, a youth bed, pillows for a boys' dorm (for pillow fights?), sets of dishes, giving Christmas suppers for the children from the Methodist Home here in Oviedo homes and at the church. Local children have been helped to go to Leesburg camp, to go to college, encouraged to remember the church, to take part in it on returning, to share something they have received from others.

Under Mrs. W.H. Martin's presidency a morning circle came into being. New people were moving into the town and church as a university was being established nearby in 1968. The Good Samaritan Circle soon became known as doers, responding to the inspiration of such members as Mrs. Phil Goree.

Still later, in 1972, our minister's wife, Mrs. Brad Dinsmore, gathered together the newest young mothers of the church into a second morning circle to study the needs of young families. They soon found themselves making contributions to Kat Cadogan's Home for Girls in Orlando. Thus we have grown to five circles, all busy in their own areas.

The spiritual part of life was quietly in the background of all that was done as Mrs. W.J. Lawton, Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, Mrs. J.H. Staley and others as spiritual life chairmen reminded the women regularly of the primary concerns of each month whether it be the invasion of Europe, the needs of a new minister, the president of the United States or some other state or national figure, striving with overwhelming responsibilities. Closely allied with the spiritual nature of woman is her outreach in hospitality to others. Hospitality was the hallmark throughout, whether entertaining women from the Geneva or Orlando churches as a group or as individual guests. These included district and state officers, visiting missionaries from Africa, China and South America, or specially invited speakers often known to some of the members. It was not unusual for Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, Sr., Mrs. R.W. Estes, Mrs. B.G. Smith or someone to offer the hospitality of her home on these occasions. Mrs. Alex Morgan of Winter Park helped with a program on the United Council of Churches, and Mrs. Hopkins (Mrs. B.G. Smith's sister) from Arkansas and Mrs. Bills from Geneva helped with a program on Great Prayers of the Bible. Mrs. Kircher from Sanford and Mrs. Leedy from Winter Park were among the speakers invited. Those who were deserving or



loved or in line to be honored were remembered at appropriate times with birthday teas and such occasions as the supper for Mrs. Cy Dawsey when she and Rev. Dawsey returned from Brazil in time for Homecoming in 1972.

A President's Christmas Tea, given by Mrs. R.W. Estes at her home, began a tradition which developed into Christmas dinners by the Women's Society for all the women of the church during Mrs. John Evans' presidency with much of the planning done by Mrs. Thomas Moon. Over the years Mrs. Madeleine Luttrell has unfailingly provided greeters in the foyer of the church at the Sunday morning service.

In community ways the Women's Society of Christian Service also expressed its interest at ballot time when members have been reminded by Mrs. James Wilson and others to vote. When a city clinic was established they accepted the sizable responsibility of providing blinds for it. To do this, with the help of Mrs. James Partin and Mrs. Don Ulrey, they employed the very womanly tactic of rummage and cooked food sales. Many are the ingenious ways devised by women to make money for their projects. Selling sponges, greeting cards, and pecans might be routine, but an apron passed from member to member with each sewing on a money patch takes originality. Always alert to new ways to promote contributions, Mrs. B.F. Wheeler inspired all members to do their best. When the Oviedo Memorial Building needed a coffee urn, Methodist women asked Baptist women to help sell vanilla extract. Mrs. C.L. West, always a willing worker, was in charge.

The support for men in service is well known. Besides letters there were boxes sent to Korea, acknowledged with thanks by General Mark Clark, and each quarter the pocket size edition of the "Upper Room" mailed to servicemen, according to the careful record keeping of Mrs. W.P. Carter. Of the nine young men who received them, several wrote their thanks.

In 1964 as men were called again overseas, this time to an unknown land called Vietnam, the public and women seemed almost unwilling to acknowledge that we must face war again. However, we furnished lists of current names and addresses of servicemen, urging members to write to them and remember them in their prayers. As war finally wound to a final cease-fire in January 1973, the church was called to a service for prayers of gratitude.

Among the many traditional and recent activities of the society we remember the giving of membership pins, of baby

memberships, of outstanding pledge services and the beginning of each year, of the new year books, of the outfitting and upkeep of the church kitchen for which Mrs. C.T. Niblack, Mrs. R.W. Estes, and Mrs. Merritt Staley have worked. The district Methodist Men were entertained at dinner when Merritt Staley was president of that group, one of many similar activities planned by Mrs. Pat Bratton. Mrs. Thomas Moon, Mrs. Walter Teague, and Mrs. W.H. Martin planned and with the help of their circle, of Mrs. B.G. Smith and others, cooked and served breakfast to the Oviedo Methodist Men monthly in the early part of 1971 to aid the air conditioning fund of the church.

The early programs of the Society, such as those of Mrs. T.W. Lawton, Mrs. B.G. Smith, and later Mrs. Lynn Mosier, were largely concerned with the individual, with her problems in living her faith, of sharing it with others around her as she helped meet their needs, and she broadened her vision to include those of other countries, races, and creeds. Mrs. Frazier Vail's original programs fulfilled the current need felt here. Furthermore, the financial faithfulness of the women of the Oviedo Methodist Church made possible the support of a number of missionaries in the field.

In 1968 when the Evangelical United Brethren joined with the Methodist Church the new charter for Women's Society of Christian Service was signed by all members at a special service in the sanctuary of the church. And now we are closing the Women's Society of Christian Service chapter and celebrating the beginning of the United Methodist Women under the guidance of Mrs. Pat Bratton, president.

Because we are a special people when we walk with God we reach out to others too. We do it now. Women did it a hundred years ago, not only to their near neighbors but to far ones too. Women in Boston's Fremont Street church had this compassion when they drew some of their friends together and said, "Let's do something together for people who don't know the love of God. Let's send help so they can know too and have that steadying knowledge in their lives."

We are part of a long tradition. Each of us is needed in God's world. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me" — Matt. 26:40.

**Kathryn Lawton  
Clara Lee Evans**





## PASTORS

Name	Dates of Appointment
<b>Orlando Circuit</b>	
Tyson, James G. . . . .	1873
McDonald, James . . . . .	1874-1875
Ransom, O.W. . . . .	Jan 1875-July 1877
S.L. Smith . . . . .	July 1887-Nov 1887

### Mellonville Circuit

Robert H. Barnett . . . . .	Nov 1877-Dec 1880
Alfred A. Presbrey . . . . .	Dec 1880-Dec 1881

### Lake Jessup Circuit (Oviedo, Geneva, and Osteen)

W.A. Simmons . . . . .	Jan 1882-July 1882
C.W. Morrison . . . . .	July 1882-July 1883
Thurlow Bishop . . . . .	July 1883-Dec. 1886
C.A. Saunders . . . . .	Jan 1886-July 1889
T.J. Euans . . . . .	July 1889-Jan 1891

### Oviedo Circuit (Oviedo, Geneva, and Osteen)

J.E. Penny . . . . .	Jan 1891-Jan 1893
R.L. Honiker . . . . .	Jan 1893-Dec 1894
E.H. Giles . . . . .	Jan 1895-Dec 1897
J.L. Pattillo . . . . .	Jan 1898-Dec 1899
G.K. Heydrick . . . . .	1899 (supernumerary)
T.J. Phillips . . . . .	Jan-Dec 1900
W.H. Steinmeyer . . . . .	Jan 1901-Nov 1903
James T. Mitchell . . . . .	Nov 1903-Dec 1905
J.W. Austin . . . . .	Jan-Dec 1906

### Oviedo and Geneva

H. F. Harris . . . . .	Jan-Dec 1907
J.C. Hooks . . . . .	Jan-Dec 1908
F.P. McCall . . . . .	Jan-July 1909
D.E. Hardin . . . . .	July-Dec 1909
J.S. Brooke . . . . .	Jan 1910-Dec 1911
D.A. Cole . . . . .	Jan-Dec 1912



## PASTORS

Name	Dates of Appointment
A.L. Hope	Jan 1913-Dec 1914
C.E. Gutheridge	Jan 1915-Dec 1917
J.E. Hartsfield	Jan-Dec 1918
L.E. Wright	Jan 1919-Dec 1922
A. MacFarlan	Jan 1923-Dec 1924
C.E. Cook	Jan 1925-June 1927
<b>Foster Chapel (a station)</b>	
C.W. Mathison	June 1927-Dec 1931
W.J. Carpenter	Jan 1932-June 1936
J.E. Woodward	June 1936-June 1938
T. Howren Norton	June 1938-Sep 1939
John L. Jones	Sep-Dec 1939
John H. Hager	Dec 1939-July 1942
C.L. Spottswood	July 1942-Oct 1942
Lionel W. Nelson	Oct 1942-Oct 1944
Nath Thompson	Oct 1944-Nov 1945
J.M. McLeod	Dec 1945-June 1946
G.W. Hutchinson	June 1946-June 1947
<b>Oviedo and Geneva</b>	
Lionel W. Nelson	June 1947-June 1948
John T. Adams, Jr.	June 1948-June 1950
E.T. Standifer	June 1950-June 1954
<b>First Methodist Church of Oviedo</b>	
George H. Carlton	June 1954-June 1961
Ben R. Blackburn	June 1961-June 1962
Robert Soka	June 1962-Feb 1964
Cyrus Dawsey	Feb 1964-June 1966
Robert Barber	June 1966-June 1968
<b>First United Methodist Church of Oviedo</b>	
Cecil N. Ogg	June 1968-June 1971
A. Bradford Dinsmore	June 1971-

### LAY LEADERS

J.H. Lee, Sr. . . . .	1913-1914	L.A. Sheldon . . . . .	1920-1924
T.C. Brannon . . . . .	1919	A.M. Stuart . . . . .	1928-1933
W.P. Carter . . . . .	1920	F.W. Talbott . . . . .	1934-1947
Steen Nelson . . . . .	1921	John Evans . . . . .	1947-1959
R.R. Wright . . . . .	1922	Merritt Staley . . . . .	1959-1968
S.R. Wainright . . . . .	1922	Frazier Vail . . . . .	1968-1970
L.E. Jordan . . . . .	1923-1934	Leon Olliff . . . . .	1970-1972
Mable Swope . . . . .	1923	J.P. Goree . . . . .	1972-

### TRUSTEES

A.A. Beall . . . . .	1873-1878	A.S. Cotton . . . . .	1921-1926
M.E. Brock . . . . .	1874-1898	Frank Norris . . . . .	1922-1924
J.H. Lee . . . . .	1875-1920	S.R. Wainright . . . . .	1922-1929
J.H. King . . . . .	1874-1909	T.L. Lingo, Sr. . . . .	1923-1971
Eric Anderson . . . . .	1878-1903	C.S. Lee . . . . .	1926-
J.M. Jones . . . . .	1897	C.R. Clonts . . . . .	1927-
Steen Nelson . . . . .	1911-1943	W.R. Clonts . . . . .	1961-1964
B.F. Wheeler, Sr. . . . .	1912-1943	M.L. Gary . . . . .	1939-
Charles West . . . . .	1919-1923	N.F. Lezette . . . . .	1925-1931
W.P. Carter . . . . .	1920-1938	Thomas Moon, Sr. . . . .	1962-1972
O.P. Swope . . . . .	1920-1923	B.F. Wheeler, Jr. . . . .	1961-
J.H. Lee, Jr. . . . .	1920-1926	Don Ulrey . . . . .	1967-
H.B. McCall, Jr. . . . .	1920	L.H. Webb . . . . .	1966-
L.E. Jordan . . . . .	1920-1922	James Wilson . . . . .	1962-1972

### CHAIRMEN of the ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

George Morgan . . . . .	1938-1960	C.R. Clonts . . . . .	1968-1970
John Evans . . . . .	1960-1968	Merritt Staley . . . . .	1970-

### STEWARDS

(only first and last years are given)

J.H. Lee . . . . .	1897-1920	Mrs. W.P. Carter . . . . .	1928-1939
J.H. King . . . . .	1897-1909	W.B. Young . . . . .	1927-1931
Steen Nelson . . . . .	1912-1921	Mrs. O.G. Wolcott . . . . .	1928-1931
C.S. Lee . . . . .	1914-1940	C.T. Niblack . . . . .	1928-1929
George Morgan . . . . .	1915-1940	A.M. Stuart . . . . .	1928-1940
T.L. Lingo . . . . .	1918-1932	Mrs. A.M. Stuart . . . . .	1928
O.P. Swope . . . . .	1919-1922	W.T. Chance . . . . .	1930-1940
J.H. Lee, Jr. . . . .	1921-1922	Mrs. T.W. Lawton . . . . .	1930-1957
W.B. Williams . . . . .	1922	Mills M. Lord, Jr. . . . .	1933-1934
Mrs. W.J. Lawton . . . . .	1923-1931	F.W. Talbott . . . . .	1935-1957 (D)
Frank Norris . . . . .	1924	McDonald Carraway . . . . .	1937-1940
L.E. Jordan . . . . .	1924-1931	R.W. Estes . . . . .	1939-1940
S.W. Swope . . . . .	1923-1925	W.C. Schumacher . . . . .	1957-1958 (R)
Mrs. C.L. West . . . . .	1923-1925	M.L. Gary . . . . .	1957-1970 (D)
C.R. Clonts . . . . .	1924-1940	Ralph Neely . . . . .	1958 (R)
Oreon Burnett . . . . .	1924-1925	Marguerite Partin . . . . .	1970-1972 (R)
W.P. Carter . . . . .	1923-1931		

R: recording steward

D: district steward



## PRESIDENTS of the UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Mrs. M.E. Brock . . . . .	1893	Mrs. C.S. Lee . . . . .	1943-1945
Mrs. J.H. King . . . . .	1901	Mrs. Oreon Burnett . . . . .	1945-1947
Mrs. H.B. McCall . . . . .	1913	Mrs. C.S. Lee . . . . .	1947
Mrs. L.R. Mitchell . . . . .	1919-1920	Mrs. J.H. Staley . . . . .	1948-1949
Mrs. W.B. Younge . . . . .	1922-1923	Mrs. H.R. Hunt . . . . .	1949-1953
Mrs. H.B. McCall . . . . .	1925	Mrs. Robert Smith . . . . .	1953-1954
Mrs. B.F. Wheeler . . . . .	1926-1927	Mrs. Clara E. Mariner . . . . .	1954-1959
Mrs. C.W. Mathison . . . . .	1928-1931	Mrs. Charles Shaffer . . . . .	1959-1963
Mrs. A.M. Stewart . . . . .	1932-1934	Mrs. William H. Martin . . . . .	1963-1966
Mrs. B.F. Wheeler . . . . .	1935-1937	Mrs. R.W. Estes . . . . .	1966-1969
Mrs. C.S. Lee . . . . .	1938	Miss Kathryn Lawton . . . . .	1969-1970
Mrs. J.H. Staley . . . . .	1939	Mrs. Merritt Staley . . . . .	1970-1971
Mrs. Don Carraway . . . . .	1940	Mrs. John W. Evans . . . . .	1971-1972
Mrs. W.J. Lawton . . . . .	1942-1943	Mrs. Pat Bratton . . . . .	1973-1974

## TREASURERS

L.E. Jordan . . . . .	1923-1929	James W. Abell . . . . .	1969-1971
Mrs. W.P. Carter . . . . .	1929-1942	Mrs. Erwin Abell . . . . .	1971-1972
Mrs. Max Leinhart . . . . .	1942-1969	Ralph Neely . . . . .	1972-

## LAY DELEGATES to the ANNUAL CONFERENCE

(only first and last years are given)

Mrs. O.G. Wolcott . . . . .	1927-1930	J.H. Lee . . . . .	1896-1917
Mrs. C.M. Mathison . . . . .	1927-1929	J.H. King . . . . .	1896-1909
C.R. Clonts . . . . .	1927-1949	Eric Anderson . . . . .	1897-1899
Mrs. S.R. Wainright . . . . .	1927-1934	Steen Nelson . . . . .	1909-1919
A.M. Stuart . . . . .	1928-1937	T.L. Cushing . . . . .	1910
Mrs. B.F. Wheeler, Sr. . . . .	1929-1962	Charles West . . . . .	1911
Mrs. T.L. Lingo . . . . .	1938	George Morgan . . . . .	1915-1958
Mrs. W.J. Carpenter . . . . .	1931	Mrs. George Morgan . . . . .	1915
E.J. Laney . . . . .	1932	T.C. Brannon . . . . .	1917
Mrs. Oreon Burnett . . . . .	1933-1934	L.E. Jordan . . . . .	1920
F.W. Talbott . . . . .	1939-1961	W.P. Carter . . . . .	1920-1930
M. Lee Gary . . . . .	1944-1949	Mrs. W.P. Carter . . . . .	1920-1940
Mrs. Max Leinhart . . . . .	1945-1946	Mr. and Mrs. C.S. Lee . . . . .	1921
John W. Evans . . . . .	1948-1971	R.R. Wright . . . . .	1921
Robert Lee . . . . .	1954	Mrs. H.B. McCall . . . . .	1923-1924
Mrs. E.L. Luttrell . . . . .	1956-1960	Mrs. W.J. Lawton . . . . .	1924-1930
Mrs. R.W. Estes . . . . .	1956-1968	Mrs. L.R. Mitchell . . . . .	1924
Merritt Staley . . . . .	1961	Mrs. A. MacFarlan . . . . .	1923
Mrs. James Wilson . . . . .	1963	Mrs. S.W. Swope . . . . .	1923-1925
Mrs. B.G. Smith . . . . .	1965-1968	Mrs. C.E. Cook . . . . .	1924-1926
Mrs. C.G. Shaffer . . . . .	1966	W.B. Young . . . . .	1926-1930
Jack Bratton . . . . .	1969-1973	Mrs. W.J. Daniel . . . . .	1925





